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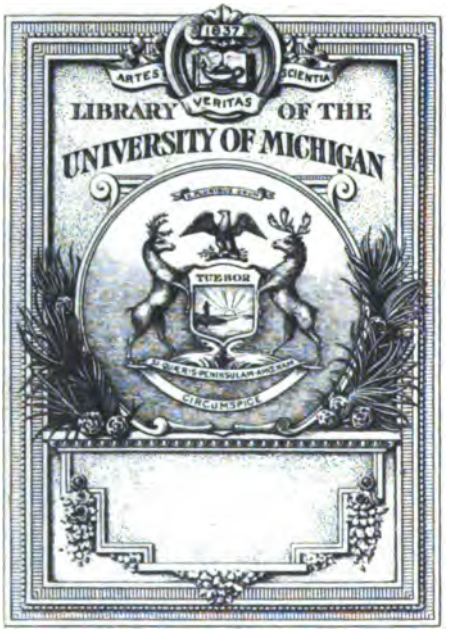
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PORTRAITS OF AMERICAN WOMEN. Illustrated.
PORTRAITS OF WOMEN. Illustrated.
UNION PORTRAITS. Illustrated.
CONFEDERATE PORTRAITS. Illustrated.
LEE THE AMERICAN. Illustrated.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

UNION PORTRAITS

UNIV. OF MICH.

WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN

UNION PORTRAITS

BY

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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Published April 1916

TO

ELLERY SEDGWICK

WITH

INFINITE GRATITUDE FOR

THE TWO GREATEST KINDNESSES THAT CAN BE SHOWN

BY AN EDITOR: GIVING ADVICE

WHEN IT IS WANTED, AND WITHHOLDING IT

WHEN IT IS NOT

I don't believe the truth ever will be known, and I have a great contempt for History.

GENERAL MEADE

I hate the "Nil de mortuis," etc. What do men die for, except that posterity may impartially judge, and get the full benefit of their example?

SAMUEL BOWLES

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PREFACE

THE use of the word "portraits," as in this book, has been criticized, and with justice. It is always a mistake to transfer terms from one art to another. The portrait-painter presents his subject at a particular moment of existence, with full and complete individuality for that moment, but with only the most indirect suggestion of all the varied and complicated stages of life and character that have preceded. The object of the psychographer is precisely the opposite. From the complex of fleeting experiences that make up the total of man's or woman's life he endeavors to extricate those permanent habits of thought and action which constitute what we call character, and which, if not unchangeable, are usually modified only by a slow and gradual process. His aim further is to arrange and treat these habits or qualities in such a way as to emphasize their relative importance, and to illustrate them by such deeds and words, as, irrespective of chronological sequence, shall be most significant and most impressive.

This is a task in which final and absolute results are obviously impossible and even comparative success is not easy. None knows this better than the

psychographer, and his effort is not so much to achieve final results as to stimulate readers to reflect more deeply on the curious and fascinating mystery of their own and others' lives.

The best name for the product of the psychographer's art is "psychographs." But "portraits" has the sanction of high authority and example, while "psychographs" is shocking to the cautious imagination of a publisher, and would hardly allure any but the most adventurous purchasers.

In dealing with men whose characters and achievements have been the subject of passionate controversy, it has naturally been impossible to satisfy every one. The portraits of Hooker and of McClellan are those which, when first published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, called forth the most energetic protest, and in the case of Hooker a good deal of evidence has been presented, which has led me to modify my judgment to a considerable extent. As regards McClellan, I have been moved to examine further a number of works by his defenders and admirers, notably, General Emery Upton's *Military Policy of the United States*, *The Life and Letters of Emery Upton* by Peter S. Michie, and *Antietam and the Maryland and Virginia Campaigns* by I. W. Heysinger. I am very glad to call the attention of readers to these books, in which it is maintained, with more or less elaborate argument, that if McClellan had not been persistently thwarted by Lincoln, and especially by

Stanton, he would have crushed the Rebellion and ended the war two years earlier. The study of such writers has not, however, inclined me to alter my portrait, which stands substantially as it was printed at first.

To express my gratitude individually to all the numerous correspondents who have assisted me with corrections and suggestions would be impossible. Suffice it to say that the aid thus received has been thoroughly appreciated.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD.

WELLESLEY HILLS, MASSACHUSETTS,
October 1, 1915.

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UNION PORTRAITS

I

GEORGE BRINTON McCLELLAN

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Philadelphia, December 3, 1826.
Graduated at West Point, 1846.
Mexican War, 1846, 1847.
Taught at West Point till 1851.
Visited the Crimea with Military Commission, 1855.
Resigned from service, 1857.
Railroad management till 1861.
Married Ellen Mary Marcy, May 22, 1860.
Commanded in West, summer of 1861.
Commanded in East, July, 1861, to October, 1862.
Candidate for President, 1864.
Governor of New Jersey, 1878.
Died, October 29, 1885.

UNION PORTRAITS

I

GEORGE BRINTON McCLELLAN

I

Good fortune seemed to wait on McClellan's early career. He graduated from West Point in 1846, just at the outset of the Mexican War, and plunged into active service at once. In Mexico every one spoke well of him. He showed energy, resource, and unquestioned personal courage. He was handsome, thoroughly martial in appearance, kindly, and popular. After his return from Mexico, he taught at West Point, took part, as an engineer, in Western exploration, then served as one of the Government's military commission in the Crimea, and so acquired a technical knowledge much beyond that of the average United States officer. In the latter fifties he resigned from the service and went into railroading, which probably gave him practical experience more valuable than could have been gained by fighting Indians.

At the beginning of the Civil War, in 1861, McClellan seems to have been generally looked upon as a most competent soldier. He was decid-

edly successful in his first campaign in Ohio and West Virginia, and when he was called to Washington to command the Army of the Potomac it appeared as if a brilliant and distinguished future were before him.

In studying that future and the man's character in relation to it, it will be interesting to begin by getting his own view. This is easily done. He was one who spoke of himself quite liberally in print, though reticent in conversation. In his book, "McClellan's Own Story," he gives a minute account of his experiences, and the editor of the book added to the text an extensive selection from the general's intimate personal letters to his wife. The letters are so intimate that, in one aspect, it seems unfair to use them as damaging evidence. It should be pointed out, however, that while the correspondence amplifies our knowledge and gives us admirable illustration, it really brings out no qualities that are not implied for the careful observer in the text of the book itself and even in the general's formal reports and letters.

What haunts me most, as I read these domestic outpourings, is the desire to know what Mrs. McClellan thought of them. Did she accept everything loyally? Was she like the widow of the regicide Harrison, of whom Pepys records, with one of his exquisite touches, "It is said, that he said that he was sure to come shortly at the right hand of Christ to judge them that now had judged him;

and that his wife do expect his coming again"? [1] Or had Mrs. McClellan, in spite of all affection, a little critical devil that sometimes nudged her into smiling? I wonder. General Meade says she was a charming woman. "Her manners are delightful; full of life and vivacity, great affability, and very ready in conversation. . . . I came away quite charmed with her esprit and vivacity." [2] Remember this, when you read some of the following extracts and you will wonder as I do.

But as to the general, and his view of himself. He considered that he was humble and modest, and very fearful of elation and vainglory. There can be no doubt that he was absolutely sincere in this, and we must reconcile it with some other things as best we can. How genuinely touching and solemn is his account of his parting with his predecessor, Scott, whom, nevertheless, he had treated rather cavalierly. "I saw there the end of a long, active, and ambitious life, the end of the career of the first soldier of his nation; and it was a feeble old man scarce able to walk; hardly any one there to see him off but his successor. Should I ever become vainglorious and ambitious, remind me of that spectacle. I pray every night and every morning that I may become neither vain nor ambitious, that I may be neither depressed by disaster nor elated by success, and that I may keep one single object in view — the good of my country." [3]

The self-denying patriotism here suggested is

even more conspicuous in McClellan's analysis of himself than humility or modesty, and again no one can question that his professions of such a nature are absolutely sincere. However one may criticize the celebrated letter of advice written to Lincoln from Harrison's Landing, it is impossible to resist the impetuous solemnity of its closing words. "In carrying out any system of policy which you may form you will require a Commander-in-Chief of the Army — one who possesses your confidence, understands your views, and who is competent to execute your orders by directing the military forces of the nation to the accomplishment of the objects by you proposed. I do not ask that place for myself. I am willing to serve you in such position as you may assign me, and I will do so as faithfully as ever subordinate served superior. I may be on the brink of eternity, and as I hope forgiveness from my Maker I have written this letter with sincerity toward you and from love for my country."

It is necessary to bear these passages — and there are many similar ones — in mind, as we progress with McClellan; for the leadership of one of the most splendid armies in the world through the great campaigns of the Peninsula and Antietam fostered a temper that often seems incompatible with modesty and sometimes even with patriotism. We must remember that he found the whole country looking to him with enthusiasm.

GEORGE BRINTON McCLELLAN

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We must remember that he was surrounded — to some extent he surrounded himself — with men who petted, praised, and flattered him. We must remember that in the war, from the first, he never had the wholesome discipline of a subordinate position, but was one of the few generals who began by commanding an independent army. We must remember especially the fortunate — or unfortunate — circumstances of his earlier life. As Colonel McClure says, he would have been a different man, "had he been a barefoot alley boy, trained to tag and marbles and jostling his way in the world." [5]

The explanation of many things is well given by a passage in one of his earlier letters. "I never went through such a scene in my life, and never expect to go through such another one. You would have been surprised at the excitement. At Chillicothe the ladies had prepared a dinner, and I had to be trotted through. They gave me about twenty beautiful bouquets and almost killed me with kindness. The trouble will be to fill their expectations, they seem to be so high. I could hear them say, 'He is our own general'; 'Look at him, how young he is'; '*He* will thrash them'; 'He'll do,' etc., etc., *ad infinitum*." [6]

Doubtless there are cool and critical heads that can stand this sort of thing without being turned, but McClellan's was not one of them. Even in his Mexican youth a certain satisfaction with his own achievements and capacity can be detected in his

letters. "I've enough to do to occupy half a dozen persons for a while; but I rather think I can get through it."[7] In the full sunshine of glory this satisfaction rose to a pitch which sometimes seems abnormal.

Let us survey its different manifestations. As the organizer of an army, it is generally admitted that McClellan had few superiors. He took the disorderly mob which fled from the first Bull Run and made it the superb military instrument that broke Lee's prestige at Gettysburg and finally strangled the Confederacy. In achieving this, his European studies must have been of great help to him, as setting an ideal of full equipment and finished discipline. Some think his ideal was too exacting and involved unnecessary delay. He himself denies this and disclaims any desire for an impossible perfection.[8] At any rate, praise from others as to his organizing faculty would be disputed by few or none. Yet even on this point one would prefer to hear others praise and not the man himself. "I do not know who could have organized the Army of the Potomac as I did."[9] It has a strange sound. And this is not a private letter, but a sentence deliberately penned for posterity.

And how did he judge himself in other lines of military achievement? What was McClellan's opinion of McClellan as a strategist and thinker? From the beginning of the war he was ever fertile in plans, which, as he asserted, would assure speedy

success and the downfall of the Confederacy, plans involving not only military movements but the conduct of politics. He sent these plans to Scott in the early days, and was snubbed. Later he submitted them to Lincoln and the last was snubbed — by silence — even more severely than the first had been. McClellan worked out these plans in loving and minute detail. Every contingency was foreseen and every possible need in men, supplies, and munitions was figured on. As a consequence, the needs could never be filled — and the plans never be executed. The very boldness and grasp of the conception made the execution limited and feeble. And the plans were so exquisitely complete that in this stumbling world they could never be put into practical effect. I have met such men. And so have you.

On the other hand, the fact that McClellan's plans were never realized left them all the more attractive in their ideal beauty. "Had the Army of the Potomac been permitted to remain on the line of the James, I would have crossed to the south bank of that river, and while engaging Lee's attention in front of Malvern, would have made a rapid movement in force on Petersburg, having gained which, I would have operated against Richmond and its communications from the west, having already gained those from the south." [10] Oh, the charm of that "would have," which no man can absolutely gainsay! Or take a more gen-

eral and even more significant passage: "Had the measures recommended been carried into effect the war would have been closed in less than one half the time and with infinite saving of blood and treasure." [11] What salve is in "would have" for an aching memory and a wounded pride! And there is comfort, also, in repeating to one's self — and others — the acknowledgment of courteous enemies "that they feared me more than any of the Northern generals, and that I had struck them harder blows when in the full prime of their strength." [12]

Well, a general should be a leader as well as a thinker, should not only plan battles but inspire them. How was it with McClellan in this regard? Some of those who fought under him have fault to find. Without the slightest question of their commander's personal courage, they think that he was too absorbed in remote considerations to throw himself with passion into direct conflict. "He was the most extraordinary man I ever saw," says Heintzelman, who was, to be sure, not one of the general's best friends. "I do not see how any man could leave so much to others and be so confident that everything would go just right." [13] With which, however, should be compared Lee's remark: 'I think and work with all my power to bring the troops to the right place at the right time, then I have done my duty. As soon as I order them forward into battle, I leave my army

in the hands of God." [14] But McClellan himself had no doubts about his leadership. There can be no question but that his grandiloquent proclamations at the beginning of the war spoke his whole heart, which was not much changed later on. "Soldiers! I have heard that there was danger here. I have come to place myself at your head and to share it with you. I fear now but one thing — that you will not find foeman worthy of your steel. I know that I can rely upon you." [15]

In his belief that he had the full confidence of his men McClellan has the world with him. They loved him and he loved them. One of the most charming things about him is his deep interest in the welfare of his soldiers, his sympathy with their struggles and their difficulties, though some think he carried this so far as to spare them in a fashion not really merciful in the end. When he is temporarily deprived of command and his army is fighting, he begs passionately to be allowed at least to die with them. When he is restored to them, he portrays their enthusiastic delight in perhaps the most curious of many passages of this nature. "As soon as I came to them the poor fellows broke through all restraints, rushed from the ranks and crowded around me, shouting, yelling, shedding tears, thanking God that they were with me again, and begging me to lead them back to battle. It was a wonderful scene, and proved that I had the hearts of these men." [16]

The most singular instance of McClellan's excessive reliance on his own judgment is his perpetual, haunting, unalterable belief that the enemy were far superior to him in number. No evidence, no argument, no representation from subordinates or outsiders could shake him in this opinion.[17] Send more men, more men, more men, the rebels outnumber me, was his increasing cry. The curious force of this prepossession, as well as the man's characteristic ingenuity, show in his reply to Lincoln's suggestion that as Lee had sent away troops, it must be a good time to attack. Oh, says McClellan, in effect, can't you see that if he has troops to spare, his numbers must be too prodigious for me to cope with?

This delusion as to numbers naturally made negative success seem triumph, and magnified great things into even greater. Thus, the general writes during Antietam: "We are in the midst of the most terrible battle of the war — perhaps of history. Thus far it looks well, but I have great odds against me." [18] In reality Lee's force was less than McClellan's.

All of the general's really great achievements are thus made much of, until impatient critics are strongly inclined to depreciate them. He announced that he had "secured solidly for the Union that part of West Virginia north of the Kanawha and west of the mountains." [19] No doubt, he had; but — Of the battle of Malvern

Hill he says: "I doubt whether, in the annals of war, there was ever a more persistent and gallant attack, or a more cool and effective resistance." [20] And again: "I have every reason to believe that our victory at Malvern Hill was a crushing one — one from which he [the enemy] will not readily recover." [21] The last words McClellan wrote were a laudation of the Army of the Potomac — and its commander — in reference to the retreat from the Peninsula: "It was one of those magnificent episodes which dignify a nation's history, and are fit subjects for the grandest efforts of the poet and the painter." [22] Hooker — of course a somewhat prejudiced witness — says of the same event: "It was like the retreat of a whipped army. We retreated like a parcel of sheep; everybody on the road at the same time; and a few shots from the rebels would have panic-stricken the whole command." [23] Finally, of his last battle, Antietam, the general says: "Those in whose judgment I rely tell me that I fought the battle splendidly and that it was a masterpiece of art." [24]

I ask myself how the witty and vivacious woman who charmed Meade received such words as these. Did that little critical devil nudge her, or did she loyally "expect his coming again"?

II

A commander who took this view of what he had accomplished almost necessarily developed an extraordinary sense of his importance to the cause and to the country. McClellan was important. We should never forget it. Only perhaps no one was so important as he deemed himself to be. His deep sense of responsibility is delightfully blended with other marked elements of his character in a brief telegram to Lincoln, shortly before Antietam: "I have a difficult task to perform, but with God's blessing will accomplish it. . . . My respects to Mrs. Lincoln. Received most enthusiastically by the ladies. Will send you trophies." [25] Over and over again he repeats that he has saved the country. "Who would have thought, when we were married, that I should so soon be called upon to save my country?" [26] "I feel some little pride in having, with a beaten and demoralized army, defeated Lee so utterly and saved the North so completely." [27] And in the solemn preface to his book he proclaims to an expectant world: "Twice, at least, I saved the capital, once created and once reorganized a great army." [28]

The most striking example of this self-exaltation, amounting nearly to mania, is the letter written to Burnside, in May, 1862: "The Government have deliberately placed me in this position. If I win, the greater the glory. If I lose, they will be damned

forever, both by God and men." [20] And the tone in which he continues shows that his situation had taken hold of him with an approach to religious ecstasy: "I sometimes think now that I can almost realize that Mahomet was sincere. When I see the hand of God guarding one so weak as myself, I can almost think myself a chosen instrument to carry out his schemes. Would that a better man had been selected." [20]

It is no wonder that the bee of dictatorship buzzed in a brain so feverishly overwrought. That the idea entered and was considered, if not entertained, there can be no question. Flatterers urged it, and circumstances, viewed as McClellan viewed them, seemed to suggest it. "The order depriving me of the command created an immense deal of deep feeling in the army — so much so that many were in favor of my refusing to obey the order, and of marching upon Washington to take possession of the government." [21] The general is even said to have remarked to one very near him, "How these brave fellows love me, and what a power their love places in my hands! What is there to prevent my taking the government in my own hands?" [22]

The man's fund of native common sense was there to prevent it. But it is evident that he lovingly considered the possibility. Only, we must remember that such consideration was not prompted by personal motives, but by a genuine

patriotism. He says so and we must believe him. If no one else but him could save the country, it was his duty to save it. "I receive letter after letter, have conversation after conversation, calling on me to save the nation, alluding to the presidency, dictatorship, etc. As I hope one day to be united with you forever in heaven, I have no such aspiration. I would cheerfully take the dictatorship and agree to lay down my life when the country is saved." [33]

All this time there was a government in Washington — existing chiefly to annoy him, so McClellan thought. The worst effect of the general's serene — or perturbed — self-confidence was that it bred an entire disbelief in the judgment of others. He was impatient with his subordinates when they differed from him, did not seek their advice or trust their ability. "In Heaven's name give me some general officers who understand their profession," he writes in the early days.[34] With his superiors — his few superiors, Halleck, Stanton, Lincoln — and with the Government they represented, he endeavored to be civil, but he felt that they knew nothing about war, and where they could not be coaxed, they must be disciplined. Among Lincoln's many difficulties none, perhaps, were greater than those with McClellan. The President argued patiently, remonstrated gently, reproved paternally, submitted to neglect that resembled impertinence, kicked his heels like a

messenger boy in the general's waiting-room, and declared, with his divine self-abnegation, that he would hold McClellan's horse if that would help win victory. In return, the general patronized his titular commander-in-chief when things went well, satirized him when they went doubtfully, — "I do not yet know what are the military plans of the gigantic intellects at the head of the government," [35] — and when they went ill, uttered unequivocal condemnation. "It is the most infamous thing that history has recorded." [36]

Ropes's analysis of McClellan's attitude in this connection is so penetrating and so suggestive that I cannot pass it by: "There are men so peculiarly constituted that when they have once set their hearts on any project, they cannot bear to consider the facts that militate against their carrying it out; they are impatient and intolerant of them; such facts either completely fall out of their minds, so to speak, as if they had never been heard of, or, if they subsequently make themselves felt, they seem to men of this temper to have assumed an inimical aspect, and, what is worse, inasmuch as it is impossible for any man to get angry with facts, such men instinctively fix upon certain individuals whom they associate in some way, more or less remote, with these unwelcome facts, and whom they always accuse, in their own thought, at least, of hostility or deception. Such a mind we conceive to have been that of General McClellan." [37]

It is only thus that we can explain the extreme bitterness of a nature otherwise kindly and generous. The perturbed and anxious spirit saw enemies everywhere, magnified real hostility and imagined hostility where there was none. Political opposition becomes malignant hatred. "You have no idea of the undying hate with which they [the Abolitionists] pursue me; but I take no notice of them." [38] Anger with Halleck and Stanton was perhaps natural. Many men got angry with Halleck and Stanton. It is not the place to judge either of them here; but it will be generally admitted that their different ways of dealing with subordinates were not such as to inspire a happy frame of mind. Certainly they did not in McClellan. Yet it may be questioned whether either Stanton or Halleck considered the general an object of personal spite or quite deserved the fierce abuse which he showered upon them freely. "Of all the men whom I have encountered in high position Halleck was the most hopelessly stupid. It was more difficult to get an idea through his head than can be conceived by any one who never made the attempt." [39] And to Stanton, "who would say one thing to a man's face and just the reverse behind his back," [40] was addressed one of the most impertinent sentences ever written by a soldier to his military superior: "If I save this army now, I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you or to any other persons in Wash-

ington. You have done your best to sacrifice this army." [41]

But the same bitterness was manifested toward men much less deserving of it than Halleck or Stanton. Few of the Northern generals were more hardly used by fortune than McDowell, and impartial judges declare him to have been a soldier and a gentleman. McClellan tries to treat him well, but finds it hopeless. "He never appreciated my motives, and felt no gratitude for my forbearance and kindness. . . . I have long been convinced that he intrigued against me to the utmost of his power." [42] Burnside, again, was McClellan's devoted friend and admirer, but, from some cause or other, he failed to carry out his leader's plans at Antietam, and, much against his will, he allowed himself to be forced into McClellan's place. This is what he gets for it: "I cannot, from my long acquaintance with Burnside, believe that he would deliberately lie, but I think that his weak mind was turned; that he was confused in action; and that subsequently he really did not know what had occurred and was talked by his staff into any belief they chose." [43]

To such an extent can a sturdy confidence in self poison minds of really noble and magnanimous strain.

III

So we have examined carefully McClellan's own judgment on his own career and achievements. Now let us see what others thought of them. If the discrepancy at times is startling we can remember the remark of Lee to a subordinate who was trying to draw him out about another subordinate: "Well, sir, if that is your opinion of General ——, I can only say that you differ very widely from the general himself."

Not all critics agree in their judgment, however, in this, any more than in other cases. McClellan has many admirers who speak almost as enthusiastically of what he did and what he might have done as he could. The less discreet are not, perhaps, always fortunate in their commendation, exonerating their favorite at the expense of others who did not, as most of us believe, deserve abuse. Thus George Ticknor Curtis asserts: "From the President down, through the various ranks of politicians or soldiers by whom he was surrounded, all knew in their hearts that the only reason why McClellan had failed to reach Richmond, and been obliged to execute his flank movement to the James, was because McDowell had been arrested by express orders from Washington on his march to effect a junction with McClellan's right." "And Hillard declares that "General McClellan's communications to the President were generally in

reply to inquiries or suggestions from the latter, whose restless and meddlesome spirit was constantly moving him to ask questions, obtrude advice, and make comments upon military matters, which were as much out of his sphere as they were beyond his comprehension." [45]

But McClellan has defenders of more weight. The Comte de Paris, influenced no doubt partly by social relations, but clear-sighted in all his judgments, holds decidedly that his friend would have achieved far more if the Government had not thwarted him. Lee, a generous adversary, declared with emphasis that McClellan was the best of the generals to whom he was opposed,[46] and an impartial judge of the highest standing, Moltke, is said to have remarked that if the American commander had been supported as he should have been, the war would have ended two years sooner than it did.[47] Best of all friendly judgments are the sober and discriminating words of Grant: "It has always seemed to me that the critics of McClellan do not consider this vast and cruel responsibility — the war a new thing to all of us, the army new, everything to do from the outset, with a restless people and Congress. McClellan was a young man when this devolved upon him, and if he did not succeed, it was because the conditions of success were so trying. If McClellan had gone into the war as Sherman, Thomas, or Meade, had fought his way along and up, I have no reason to suppose

that he would not have won as high distinction as any of us." [48]

Even those who are inclined to find fault, find much to praise. As to the general's organizing faculty there is but one verdict. Only genius of the highest order in this line could have made the Army of the Potomac the magnificent instrument which others were afterwards to use so effectively. Further, both Ropes and Henderson, though feeling that McClellan did not accomplish all that he should have done with the means at his disposal, are inclined to agree with him in the belief that he was unduly hampered and thwarted by the Washington authorities. And Palfrey, who, beginning with enthusiastic admiration, was forced in the end to recognize his chieftain's many faults, yet declares that "there are strong grounds for believing that he was the best commander the Army of the Potomac ever had," and that "a growing familiarity with his history as a soldier increases the disposition to regard him with respect and gratitude, and to believe, while recognizing the limitations of his nature, that his failure to accomplish more was partly his misfortune and not altogether his fault." [49]

It will be observed that most of the praise is in the nature of apology and lacks entirely the trumpet tone with which McClellan proclaims his own feats of arms. Much of the criticism of him has no flavor of apology whatever. Nor is this confined

to the later reflection of cool military judges. At the height of his popularity, when the army and the country idolized him, outsiders like Gurowski [50] refused to believe in his gifts, or his judgments, or his future. W. H. Russell, meeting him in September, 1861, foresaw, with singular acuteness, that he was not a man of action or not likely to act quickly, and felt that he dallied too much in Washington, instead of being among his troops, stimulating them in victory and consoling or reprimanding them after defeat.[51]

Among the general's own subordinates there was anything but a concert of enthusiasm about his person or his achievements. Fighters like Kearny and Hooker were naturally dissatisfied. The latter did not hesitate to express his opinion freely at all times, telling the Committee on the Conduct of the War that the Peninsula campaign failed simply because of lack of generalship in the commander.[52] While Kearny wrote, in August, 1862: "McClellan is the failure I ever proclaimed him. He will only get us into more follies — more waste of blood — fighting by driblets. He has lost the confidence of all. . . . He is burnt out." [53] And Meade, a far saner and more reasonable judge, expresses himself almost as strongly: "He was always waiting to have everything just as he wanted before he would attack, and before he could get things arranged as he wanted them, the enemy pounced on him and thwarted all his plans.

There is now no doubt he allowed three distinct occasions to take Richmond slip through his hands, for want of nerve to run what he considered risks." [54]

This contemporary judgment of Meade's may be said, on the whole, to anticipate the conclusion of most historians. Some dwell more than others on what might have happened if McClellan had met with fewer difficulties; but there is wide agreement that the result of his efforts is as disappointing when viewed now calmly in the light of all known facts as it was to Lincoln and the country in 1862. Swinton, certainly no personal enemy of McClellan, sums up the matter in fairly representative fashion: "He was assuredly not a great general; for he had the pedantry of war rather than the inspiration of war. . . . His power as a tactician was much inferior to his talent as a strategist, and he executed less boldly than he conceived." [55]

So we recur to the remark of Lee: "Well, if that is your opinion of General ——, I can only say that you differ very widely from the general himself." For what is of interest to us is not McClellan's generalship, but McClellan's character.

Thus, after our review of criticism and hostile judgments, we ask ourselves, What impression did all this make on the subject of it? He heard the criticism. He was well aware of the judgments. Did they produce any impression on him? Did he say to himself: After all, I may be mistaken; after

all, I may have blundered? Did he have strange doubts and tormenting anxieties, as to whether, possibly, a great opportunity may have come to him and he may not have been equal to it? I have read his writings carefully and I find nothing of the sort. There were moments of trouble, as when Cox noted that "the complacent look which I had seen upon McClellan's countenance on the 17th [of September, 1862] . . . has disappeared. There was a troubled look instead." [56] There were moments of anguish. "Franklin told me that McClellan said to him, as they followed Lander's corpse, that he almost wished he was in the coffin instead of Lander." [57] Moments of self-distrust there were not, or they left no traces.

It is true, Mr. Rhodes points out that with adversity McClellan's letters, even to his wife, grew somewhat humbler and less assertive; [58] yet in his book, written twenty years later, the tone is much what it was at first. It is true that in many places he recognizes generally that he was human and that humanity is always liable to err. He even goes so far as to admit — generally — that "while striving conscientiously to do my best, it may well be that I have made great mistakes that my vanity does not permit me to perceive." [59] But as to particular action in particular circumstances, he cannot feel anything but thorough contentment. His much complained of delays he justifies entirely. "Nor has he [the general is using the third

person], even at this distant day, and after much bitter experience, any regret that he persisted in his determination." [60] His most singular error, that as to the numbers of the enemy, was probably never shaken to the end. In short, one brief sentence sums up his complicated character in this regard with delightful completeness: "That I have to a certain extent failed I do not believe to be my fault, though my self-conceit probably blinds me to many errors that others see." [61]

Not satisfied with impugning McClellan's generalship, his enemies went further and attacked his loyalty. His known dislike of radical abolitionism constantly suggested charges of indifference to Union success. It was said that he delayed purposely. It was said that he showed traitorous friendliness to Southerners. It was said that he did not wish the war to come to a too speedy close, and that while he held the highest military office under the Government he was ready to conspire for a change in the Government itself. Even Lincoln, in a moment of despair after the second Bull Run, observed to a member of his household, "He has acted badly towards Pope; he really wanted him to fail." [62] And the sum of all these charges is given in the remarkable scene between President and general which has been recorded for us by McClellan himself. On the 8th of March, 1862, McClellan was in the President's office and Lincoln intimated in very plain terms that he heard many

rumors to the effect that the general was removing the defenders from Washington for the purpose of giving the city over to the enemy. The President concluded by saying that such removal did look to him much like treason.[63]

Lincoln must have been deeply moved, indeed, when he suggested this, and no one can blame McClellan for resenting it bitterly and demanding an instant retraction, for we know, as well as he did, that to accuse him of treason in any proper sense of the term was utterly and preposterously false. Whatever dispute there may be about McClellan's generalship, however one may question the wisdom and even the propriety of his conduct toward his superiors, no one who has read his intimate letters can doubt for a moment that he was thoroughly and sincerely patriotic, desired only the welfare of his country, and worked in the very best way he knew for the complete and speedy restoration of the Union. His way may not have been Lincoln's way, may not have been the best way; but such as it was, he was ready to give his life for it. "The unity of this nation, the preservation of our institutions, are so dear to me, that I have willingly sacrificed my private happiness with the single object of doing my duty to my country. When the task is accomplished, I shall be glad to return to the obscurity from which events have drawn me." [64]

IV

Such words have been written by others, not always with entire sincerity. But the whole tenor of McClellan's life bears witness to his truth in this matter. He was not only a patriot, he was a man of singular purity and elevation of character. He was not only ready to talk about great sacrifices, he was ready to do what is far harder, make little sacrifices without talking about them. Even discounting the enthusiasm of a biographer, we must recognize the force of such testimony as the following: "Of all men I have ever known McClellan was the most unselfish. Neither in his public life nor in his private life did he ever seek anything for himself. He was constantly doing something for some one else; always seeking to do good, confer pleasure, relieve sorrow, gratify a whim, do something for another." [65]

His unfailing courtesy toward high and low is universally recognized, and it was not the courtesy of indifferent ease, but was founded on genuine sympathy, a quick imaginative perception of the situation of others and a desire to adapt himself to that situation so far as was compatible with greater needs and duties.

In short, the man's life throughout was guided by fine feelings and high ideals. That, as a candidate for the Presidency against Lincoln, in 1864, he was influenced by no thought of personal ambi-

tion is difficult to believe. If so, it was probably the first and the last case of the kind in the history of that office, Washington perhaps excepted. But I do believe that McClellan sincerely thought the country needed him and his political convictions and that he would never have surrendered one jot of those political convictions for political success. In his later years he became governor of New Jersey, and in that office so carried himself as to win the respect and esteem of persons of all parties. A competent and impartial critic remarks that "a study of his messages and other state papers will show that the vital questions he ever held in mind were those connected with the public welfare of the people, while those relating to his own political future were absolutely non-existent." [66]

Also, back of all these admirable qualities was a religious faith as simple as it was sincere. Russell thought the general's extreme anxiety for Sabbath observance in the army a little inappropriate, if not a little puerile. But no one can call puerile the high ideal of Christian restraint in warfare set forth in the Harrison's Landing letter to the President: "All private property taken for military use should be paid or receipted for; pillage and waste should be treated as high crimes; all unnecessary trespass sternly prohibited, and offensive demeanor by the military towards citizens promptly rebuked." [67] It is undeniable that Sherman, working on the "war is hell" plan, accomplished more

immediate results, but there were after-effects, also, of a less desirable character.

The charm of McClellan's personal religion, as it appears casually in all his writing, is very great. Perhaps it is nowhere greater than in the simple and touching letter written to a friend in his later years: "I fancy, Sam, that we will never reach that land where it is all afternoon in any ship built by mortal hands. Our fate is to work and still to work as long as there is any work left in us; and I do not doubt that it is best, for I can't help thinking that when we reach that other and far better land we shall still have work to do throughout the long ages, only we shall then see as we go on that it is all done for the Master and under his own eye; and we will like it and never grow weary of it, as we often do here when we don't see clearly to what end we are working and our work brings us in contact with all sorts of men and things not pleasant to rub against. I suppose that the more we work here, the better we shall be trained for that other work, which after all is the great end towards which we move or ought to be moving." [68]

These are winning words. They show a winning and a simple soul, the soul of one who was assuredly a fine type of the Christian — and we are proud to add, of the American — gentleman.

I say "winning" advisedly; for as yet I have dwelt little on McClellan's wonderful power of winning men. As a fighter he may have failed. As a leader, at least so far as the faculty of gaining

absolute devotion goes, he assuredly succeeded. It is true that not all his officers were faithful to him. In his treatment of them he was led astray by flattery and by the intoxicating influence of his overwhelming position. But his power over the common soldier of the Army of the Potomac, even after comparative failure, is so wonderful as to be hard to believe and so touching as to be impossible to resist. No general in the war, on either side, unless Beauregard, who curiously resembled McClellan in many ways, evoked such instantaneous and entire enthusiasm. The subtle causes of this would be difficult to trace. Perhaps the love of popularity counted for something; but human sympathy and kindness assuredly counted for much. As to the effects there can be no dispute. "Let military critics or political enemies say what they will, he who could so move upon the hearts of a great army as the wind sways long rows of standing corn, was no ordinary man," writes General Walker.[69] And one who witnessed the passionate outburst of the troops when their leader was restored to them in September, 1862, describes it in a way never to be forgotten: "The climax seemed to be reached, however, at Middletown, where we first caught sight of the enemy. Here, upon our arrival, we found General McClellan sitting upon his horse in the road. . . . As each organization passed the general the men became apparently forgetful of everything but their love for him. They cheered and cheered again, until

they became so hoarse they could cheer no longer. It seemed as if an intermission had been declared in order that a reception might be tendered to the general-in-chief. A great crowd continually surrounded him, and the most extravagant demonstrations were indulged in. Hundreds even hugged the horse's legs and caressed his head and mane. While the troops were thus surging by, the general continually pointed with his finger to the gap in the mountains through which our path lay. It was like a scene in a play, with the roar of guns for an accompaniment. . . . General McClellan may have had opponents elsewhere; he had few, if any, among the soldiers whom he commanded." [70]

This magnetic power over the hearts of men is something great leaders — Wellington, for instance — have often lacked. It is something the very greatest leaders must have, if they would retain their hold. What a pity that McClellan, having it in such abundant measure, should not have been able to employ it for his purposes, that possessing such a great instrument, he should not have been able to use it to great ends. He himself attributed his failure to circumstances. This we cannot do. Others have wrung fortune out of far more unfavorable circumstances. Let us say, rather, that he was a man of real power given too great an opportunity. As an able soldier, true patriot, and loyal gentleman, he did what he could.

II

JOSEPH HOOKER

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Hadley, Massachusetts, November 13, 1814.
Graduated at West Point, 1837.
In Mexican War, 1846, 1847.
Resigned commission and settled in California, 1853.
Colonel of California militia, 1859.
Brigadier-general of volunteers, 1861.
Prominent in Peninsula battles, May, June, 1862.
Prominent at Antietam, September, 1862.
Prominent at Fredericksburg, December, 1862.
Commanded Army of the Potomac at Chancellorsville, May, 1863.
Succeeded by Meade, June 28, 1863.
Active in West till summer of 1864.
Relinquished command of Twentieth Corps, July, 1864.
Married Olivia Groesbeck, October 4, 1865.
Stricken with paralysis, 1867.
Died, October 31, 1879.

II

JOSEPH HOOKER

I

To say that the outer man was the best part of Hooker would be perhaps unjust. But all agree that the outer man was very striking. He was tall, thoroughly martial in carriage, with blond hair, finely cut features, an expressive mouth, and large blue eyes full of fire and of sympathy. The rich glow of his complexion characterized him from boyhood, so that an enthusiastic female admirer declared, when he left West Point, that with his ruddy cheeks, blue coat, and white trousers, he was a perfect epitome of the American flag.[1] Villard thought only one other man in the whole army, Hancock, approached Hooker in the splendor of his exterior. But General Walker observes shrewdly that he was "handsome and picturesque in the extreme, though with a fatally weak chin."[2] Turn to almost any of the portraits and you will see what General Walker means. Bear it in mind in our further study.

Hooker was a Massachusetts man, born in Hadley in 1814. His father seems to have had no great force of character, but his mother was high-principled, energetic, and had much influence over

her children. It is said that she intended her son for the Church.[3] Failing in this, she doubtless supplemented the education given him at the local academy, and sent him to West Point with the average mental equipment of a cadet of that day.

At West Point he did not stand very high. But there is a notable legend that he would have stood much higher than twenty-eighth in his class if his decided combative tendencies had not injured him.[4] Whether this be true or not, straight-out fighting was his line in life. Where he could fight simply, he accomplished something. Where he could not, his success was much less marked. And he sometimes fought those who should not have been his enemies.

In the Mexican War he won credit and deserved it. He showed personal bravery and the rarer gift of inspiring bravery in others. Thrice he was brevetted, a distinction which fell to few. He served on the staff of General Pillow and his enthusiastic biographer asserts that he furnished "all the brains and most of the energy and industry to be found at the headquarters of the division." Perhaps this is slightly exaggerated.[5]

Everybody knows that Hooker was called "Fighting Joe." Not everybody knows that the name was not given by the troops, but in pure accident by a newspaper compositor, who, having to interpret the telegraphic abbreviation "fighting — Joe Hooker," dropped the dash and created a world-known sobriquet.[6] Hooker did not like the

name, or said he did not; thought that it made him seem like a highwayman or bandit. And perhaps it has hurt him as much as it has helped him.

When the Civil War began, Hooker was entirely suited. He did not get into active service till after Bull Run, but in the Peninsula battles he fought well. At Williamsburg his division distinguished itself highly. "In every engagement," says General J. F. Rusling, "he always seemed to know exactly *what* to do and *when* to do it." [7] McClellan did, indeed, depreciate his subordinate and there was not much kindliness between them. But good judges justify Hooker. And his own reported comment on his commander's coldness is a pleasant instance of the frank humor which must have been an element of his social charm: "I say, Mott, it seems to me you and I, and your Jersey Blues and the Excelsior Brigade, were not at Williamsburg at all! Hancock did the business." [8]

This social charm was felt by many who came closely into contact with the general, and for this and other things he was unquestionably much beloved by his troops. He talked with them as man to man, took a personal interest in their doings, did not let great affairs thrust out little kindnesses. General Rusling once went to his division commander to get leave for an invalid and was refused even attention. Then he made his way to Hooker, at that time commander-in-chief. "Let me have it [the paper]," Hooker said. "I'll

show General —— a 'leave' can be granted without his approval, in a case like this." [9] When Berry was killed, Hooker "with tears in his eyes kissed his forehead and said, 'My God, Berry, why was the man on whom I relied so much to be taken away in this manner?'" [10] Hooker was just, too, and fair in dealing with his subordinates. Colonel J. A. Reynolds writes me: "I was with him every day for eight months, and I say, without hesitancy, I never knew a man who tried to be fairer and treat every one more justly than he did. He would treat the lowest in rank with the same courtesy as the highest, and no commander was more beloved by his troops than was he by the 20th Corps."

The fighting reputation that Hooker had won on the Peninsula continued and increased through the second Bull Run campaign and at Antietam, where he was wounded after an energetic attack on the Confederate left. His vigor and enthusiasm showed not only in bare fighting, but in strenuous effort to keep his troops responsive and his officers efficient. With what force does he express himself against an attempt to deprive him of one of the best of them. "I have just been shown an order relieving Brigadier-General Reynolds from the command of a division in my corps. I request that the major-general commanding will not heed this order; a scared governor ought not to be permitted to destroy the usefulness of an entire division of the

army, on the eve of important operations." [11] But his most attractive mood is undoubtedly that in which he feels the thrill and enthusiasm of actual battle. "The whole morning had been one of unusual animation to me and fraught with the grandest events. The conduct of my troops was sublime, and the occasion almost lifted me to the skies, and its memories will ever remain near me." [12]

This was at Antietam, where there was triumph. Equally fine was the general's attitude at Fredericksburg, where there was defeat. Though he would expose his men regardlessly in battle, he was always thoughtful of their welfare, so far as was compatible with duty. When some neglect was shown in the handling of ambulances, his rebuke was severe: "I regret more than all to find two officers of my command, holding high and responsible positions, showing so little concern for the efficiency and welfare of the command to which they are assigned as to seek by artifice and unfairness to destroy one and disregard the other." [13] Hence it was that this fighter, this man who was lifted almost to the skies by the exhilaration of combat, would not fling his soldiers against the impossible without a protest. Burnside ordered the charge. "I sent my aide to General Burnside to say that I advised him not to attack at that place. He returned saying that the attack must be made. I had the matter so much at heart that

I put spurs to my horse and rode over here myself and tried to persuade General Burnside to desist from the attack. He insisted on its being made." [14] It was made, magnificently, and failed magnificently. Said Hooker of it afterwards, with caustic frankness: "Finding that I had lost as many men as my orders required me to lose, I suspended the attack." [15]

II

Thus the country generally saw Hooker on the eve of the battle of Chancellorsville, in April, 1863, a brilliant, vigorous, successful soldier and corps-commander, full of fight yet not without prudence, widely popular and fairly trusted. The germs of his defects had been manifest long before, however, and we must look into them closely in preparation for our study of the great climax of his life.

All generalizations are dangerous and all the adjectives we apply to character are generalizations. The Southern officer Magruder, who had served in the same regiment with Hooker in Mexico, told Fremantle that "Hooker was essentially a mean man and a liar." [16] Hooker did mean things and made false statements. So have you. So have I. But it is not just, I hope, to call you a liar, nor me, nor Hooker, with all the grave implications of the word. Again, Palfrey, who knew him well, says that he was "brave, handsome, vain,

insubordinate, plausible, untrustworthy." [17] Elements in the man's character may justify all these words, but they need to be supplemented by others.

Let us look more closely into details. Hooker was accused of excessive drinking. Nearly all army men at that time drank. There is good evidence that Hooker, with his nervous, high-strung temperament, was unusually susceptible to alcohol, and it may be that his collapse in the crisis of Chancellorsville was in part the direct or indirect result of stimulants, though no such explanation is really required. There is, on the other hand, the best of evidence, notably that of Meade, that no indecent excess of drinking can be charged against Hooker while in command of the Army of the Potomac, and the testimony of those who lived closest to him later, in the West, proves absolutely that his habits there were sober and reputable.

Some knowledge of his earlier life is necessary in order to appreciate the force of the charges that are brought against him. When he left West Point, he was a total abstainer, yet the florid complexion, which later was attributed to alcohol, was just as marked in the cadet as in the major-general. Wearied with the dull affairs of peace, he settled in California, in the wild gold days. There he farmed, with small success, and no doubt he lived as many about him were living, unprofitably, to say the least. There is a story that he borrowed money

from Halleck and Sherman, that he came to San Francisco one Saturday to make payment after closing hours, and that by Monday morning the money was gone. This, with similar incidents, is said to have been the origin of Halleck's and Sherman's prejudice against him. The anecdote does not, however, seem quite enough to justify a sentence in a confidential letter from Halleck to Sherman, September 16, 1864: "He [Hooker] is aware that I know something about his character and conduct in California, and fearing that I may use that information against him, he seeks to ward off its effects by making it appear that I am his personal enemy." [18]

Another curious (if true) detail about this California life is furnished by Stoneman. Hooker, he says, "could play the best game of poker I ever saw until it came to the point when he should go a thousand better, and then he would flunk." [19] This may have been colored by recollections of Chancellorsville. Still, when I read it, I am reminded of that weak chin.

Whatever the dissipations of the life in California, they cannot have been wholly damning, since Hooker afterwards came to fill important positions in the great Western State and enough friends were found who believed in his future to subscribe his expenses on to Washington when the war began.

As with Halleck and Sherman thus early, how-

ever, he had the serious defect of offending wantonly those whom he should not have offended. In Mexico, for instance, he had been attached to the staff of Pillow. When Pillow was arraigned and his conduct investigated on the charges of Scott, Hooker spoke his mind with entire freedom in defense of his chief and gained the hostility of the older general. As a consequence of this, and perhaps of other grounds of prejudice, the California recruit waited vainly for some time before he could enter the Army of the Potomac.

In this case it was Hooker's tongue that damaged him and it cannot be denied that all his life that insignificant member caused him a great deal of trouble. It was a splendidly vivid and energetic tongue, could stir an army to a charge, could cheer and stimulate a friend and smite an enemy. With what a keen flash does it lighten the metallic brevity of a despatch: "The enemy may number 4000, or 5000, those half starved and badly wounded. The number of major-generals and brigadier-generals they have along is of no consequence; they are flesh and blood." [20]

But this same tongue could work astonishing havoc with reputations, most of all its owner's. It could brand individuals with a hot iron. "If General Sumner had advanced the rebellion would have been buried there. He did not advance at all." [21] Do you think General Sumner loved that tongue? It could blight, if unintentionally, a whole

arm of the service. "Who ever saw a dead cavalryman?" At the very outset of the war it achieved one of its most remarkable feats, unsurpassed, if equaled, later. Tired of seeking employment from direct military authority and ready to return to California, Hooker called on the President to explain his position. After explaining it, he concluded with the casual comment: "I was at Bull Run the other day, Mr. President [inspecting the ground, the general means], and it is no vanity in me to say I am a damned sight better general than you had on that field." [22] Must it not have been indeed a man of some kind of power who could utter such words as that and actually make Lincoln believe them?

Well, the tongue went on its way, along with the hand and sword, through the Peninsula, through Antietam and Fredericksburg. McClellan! Hooker thought poorly of McClellan and said so. McClellan was a baby. McClellan dared not fight. If McClellan had done as Hooker urged and wished, Richmond would have been ours in the spring of 1862. The subordinate testified formally before the Committee on the Conduct of the War that the failure of the Peninsula campaign was "to be attributed to the want of generalship on the part of the commander." [23]

When Burnside succeeded McClellan, it was the same with Burnside. Villard, as a newspaper man, met Hooker for the first time and had scarcely

introduced himself when the general burst into unsparing criticism of the Government, of Halleck, of McClellan, and especially of his immediate superior.[24] To his fellow soldiers he naturally did not hesitate to express the same opinions, and when he was himself in supreme command, he wrote about his predecessor words of almost incredible violence. Hooker "cannot bear to go into battle with the slanders of this wretch uncontradicted. He must swallow his words as soon as I am in a condition to address him, or I will hunt him to the ends of the earth." [25] By the way, I am not aware that the wretch ever did swallow his words, or ever was hunted.

A dangerous tongue, indeed, you see, and perhaps there was a little trouble back of the tongue; perhaps the thinking brain was not quite so effective an instrument as the acting hand. When that bluff Confederate, Whiting, writes to Beauregard, "Hooker is a fool, and always was, and that's a comfort," [26] the exaggerated estimate deserves notice chiefly because it is certain, with others similar, to have made its way to Lee and to have been his best excuse for Jackson's apparently foolhardy movement at Chancellorsville. But when Chase, Hooker's friend and warm supporter, after a confidential talk with the general, remarks that he "impressed me favorably as a frank, manly, brave, and energetic soldier, of somewhat less breadth of intellect than I had expected," [27] the

thoughtful observer is prepared for a career which shall blend its triumphs with failure, if not with disaster.

III

To this man, then, such as we have seen him, Lincoln, in January, 1863, confided the splendid Army of the Potomac and the salvation of the Union. The President had his serious misgivings and expressed them in a well-known letter, surely one of the most singular ever received by a general on undertaking an important command. Lincoln warns his subordinate against ambition, warns him against over-confidence, warns him not to talk about a dictatorship until he has done things worthy of it, warns him to fear the spirit of insubordination in the army which Hooker himself has been the most forward to cultivate. One can easily imagine the impatient contempt with which McClellan would have received such a letter. Well, all that is really fine and winning and lovable in Hooker shines out in his simple comment to his officers on receiving it: "He talks to me like a father. I shall not answer this letter until I have won him a great victory." [28]

But, alas, the general entered upon his important duties without the real confidence of the higher officers under him. "He had wounded some by openly criticizing them," says De Trobriand; "he had alienated others by putting himself forward

at their expense." [29] And again the fatal tongue intervened, with trouble at its tip. Grand reviews, riding, all gold and glitter, in company with presidents and ministers and silken petticoats, that splendid army in the spring sunshine set over against those starved and ragged rebels, engendered a confidence which would burst from lips not tutored to keep still. "The finest army on the planet." "The operations of the last three days have determined that our enemy must either ingloriously fly, or give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him." [30] "My plans are perfect, and when I start to carry them out, may God have mercy on General Lee, for I will have none." [31] "The enemy is in my power, and God Almighty cannot deprive me of them." [32] Such words as these suggest the Nemesis of great tragedy and give an enthralling interest to the dramatic story of the man who uttered them.

At first all went smoothly. Through the spring months the general reorganized his army, which had suffered somewhat from repeated failures and changes of command, and did it well. Especially he put the cavalry into more efficient condition and began the development of the admirable instrument which, in the end, served Sheridan and others so successfully.

Then, with the warm April days, came the preparations for action. The plan finally adopted is said to have originated, to some extent, with

Warren. No matter with whom it originated, Hooker made it his own, and all admit that it was an able strategic design. From the point of view of Hooker's character we note, in this regard, a rather singular contradiction. Here was a man who always talked too freely, who was notorious for saying things he should not have said; yet, the minute the full burden rested on his shoulders, he kept still. Even to his nearest subordinates he whispered no word of his intention, except so far as necessary orders required.

The general plan of campaign was simple. Hooker's army was massed on the north side of the Rappahannock, Lee's on the south, in the vicinity of Fredericksburg. Hooker proposed first crossing his cavalry well up the river, to threaten or break the communications of Lee. Then the bulk of the army was to cross above the enemy, sweep round with a great turning movement and drive him toward the east, while another force, under Sedgwick, crossing at Fredericksburg, was to bar retreat in that direction and crush the small army of the Confederates between the two.

From the beginning the weak point of the scheme was the combined action with Sedgwick. Still, the first steps went admirably. The great crossing, by the upper fords, was made before the enemy divined it, with entire success. Corps after corps swept forward triumphantly into the Wilderness, and it seemed as if Lee would really be

crushed, as his antagonist had planned. But Lee did not propose to be crushed. He met the advancing batallions in a much more aggressive fashion than Hooker expected. And suddenly this check in his plans seemed to chill the buoyant spirit of the Union commander. Instead of urging his generals, On! on! he sent word to them, Withdraw, the woods are too thick, the enemy too strong, let us establish ourselves safely at Chancellorsville and wait. It was like a burst balloon, like a great ship set aback all at once and left shivering in a change of wind. "To hear from his own lips that the advantages gained by the successful marches of his lieutenants were to culminate in fighting a defensive battle in that nest of thickets was too much, and I retired from his presence with the belief that my commanding general was a whipped man," says General Couch.[18]

So thought Lee and Jackson also. The next day, May 2, Jackson, with a large part of Lee's army, made his way through the woods across Hooker's front and past his right. Then, toward evening, the Confederates fell, like a whirlwind, upon the Union right flank, Howard and his Eleventh Corps, who had hardly dreamed of such an onset and had done little or nothing to prevent it. It is not necessary to apportion the blame strictly in this matter. There is enough for every one,—Hooker, Howard, the division commanders, and the troops, of course with most honorable excep-

tions, — enough and some left over. The disaster was as appalling as it was unexpected, and it might have been much worse, if night, the fatigue of the Confederates, and the wounding of Jackson had not intervened.

Where was Hooker? Doing what a brave and energetic soldier could do to repair immediate damage, but hardly grasping the general situation as an able commander should have grasped it. The next morning gave him his opportunity, but instead of profiting, he fought a slow, defensive battle, in which the energetic masses of Lee and Stuart had all the advantage.

Then the general was severely injured by the falling of a wooden pillar, and some think the accident robbed him of great glory, and some that for him it was a piece of rare good fortune. Even before, his subordinates felt that he had lost his hold. It was said that he was drinking. It has been said since that he was wholly abstemious and missed his drink. This would certainly be the first case in history of a great battle lost because the general-in-chief was not intoxicated.

Be that as it may, after he was injured, he ceased to be of any great value on the field of Chancellorsville. His admirers maintain that the injury is amply sufficient to account for this. They say that his second in command, Couch, should have assumed the direction of affairs and pushed the fighting. Couch himself, however, absolutely

refused to take responsibility when he might be interfered with at any moment. And he and many others hold that Hooker's control was no less efficient after the wound than it was before. "There is, in fact, no reason to suppose that his orders would have been wise, even if he had not been struck," [84] says the latest authority on the battle, Colonel W. R. Livermore. Still, still I remember that weak chin.

The small Confederate army could not, however, make any ruinous impression on the Union masses. What, then, was to be done? Behold, the general who had clutched his foe so tightly that Almighty God could not extricate him, was now for recrossing the river and beginning all over again. It seems, supplies had run short. "I think," says one critic, "(if we can imagine Grant allowing his army to be placed where Hooker's was at noon on that day), that he would have made his soldiers fry their boots, if there was nothing else to eat, before he would have recrossed the river." [85] But Hooker was not disposed to fry boots. He called his corps commanders into council. A majority of them voted to remain where they were, Meade, to be sure, alleging that recrossing might be difficult with the enemy at their heels, to which Hooker answered that Lee would be delighted to have them on the other side of the Rappahannock. Is there not a maxim of Napoleon's about never doing what your enemy wishes you to do? If so,

Hooker had forgotten it. He overruled his subordinates, ordered the puzzled Sedgwick to withdraw also, and with the best speed he could took back that great, unconquered army to the place it had left a week before with banners waving and all the royal assurance of undoubted triumph.

The army was unconquered, but the general was beaten badly, and what was much worse, the cause had received another crushing blow. It was not merely that so many men had been killed and wounded. It was not merely that Lee, with inferior numbers, had managed to sustain himself instead of giving an inch of ground. It was that all the strength and all the valor of the North had been exerted once more and had utterly failed. It was that a fourth commander had been allowed to work his pleasure with that long-suffering army, and still the rebellion was as haughty, as energetic, as aggressive as ever. So that Lincoln fell on his knees and told his God that the country could not endure another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville.[36]

But Hooker? Did he look at the thing in this way? Not the least bit in the world. In the midst of the battle his confidence seems to have been for a little time shaken. But he quickly recovered himself. The tremendous moral effect of the whole adventure, after all his vaunting, seems to have escaped him completely. On the very day of the recrossing he issued general orders the tone of which

is almost incredible. "In fighting at a disadvantage, we would have been recreant to our trust, to ourselves, our cause, and our country. Profoundly loyal, and conscious of its strength, the Army of the Potomac will give or decline battle whenever its interest or honor may demand. It will also be the guardian of its own history and its own fame." [87] Alas, no! Big words will guard no one's fame, when unaccompanied by big deeds. Even then, the deeds do better alone. And when later, sober thought had had its opportunity, the general could still write in a confidential letter to a friend, "We lost no honors at Chancellorsville." [88]

This desperate determination not to admit failure of course developed a disposition to put what blame there was on to others. That tendency did not appear immediately after the battle, and Hooker's omission to make any official report and turn in many of his records has been taken by some to mean a desire to avoid condemning his subordinates, especially Howard. If so, his charity lessened with time. When he was anxious to be summoned before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, in April, 1864, he wrote, "As it seems to be determined that I shall hold no important command hereafter, it becomes necessary for me to have less care for the future than the past, so far as my professional character is concerned. In my judgment, the record connected with my command of the Army of the Potomac had better

be made up, no matter who may suffer from it." [39]

He helped make it up with a vengeance, declaring, in sober, sworn testimony, that "there are in all armies officers [Couch and Meade] more valiant after the fight than while it is pending; and when a truthful history of the rebellion shall be written, it will be found that the Army of the Potomac is not an exception"; [40] and again, "Some of our corps commanders, and also officers of other rank, appear to be unwilling to go into a fight; in my judgment there are not many who really like to fight." [41] And this of Sedgwick! While as to his own, Hooker's, part in the affair there is not a word of apology or admission of error or weakness.

But all this was later development. For two months after Chancellorsville Hooker continued in command of the army and commanded it with vigor and intelligence. It might be supposed, however, that experience would have taught him moderation, if not humility. Apparently it did not. In predicting a decisive battle to Butterfield, he declared that he would "have every available man in the field, and if Lee escapes with his army the country are entitled to and should have my head for a football." [42] Evidently this is still the same tongue that wagged so joyously in the April days on the Rappahannock.

But if Hooker trusted himself, others did not trust him. Halleck's deep-rooted prejudice grew daily stronger and spread to the members of the

Cabinet and in some measure even to Lincoln. As a result, the general was hampered and thwarted in a way which would have made success impossible to a much greater man. It is but justice to Hooker to say that in this difficult situation he bore himself with dignity, and his serious protests to the President are as modest as they are reasonable. There should be one commander with full power, he says, and adds, "I trust that I may not be considered in the way to this arrangement, as it is a position I do not desire, and only suggest it, as I feel the necessity for concert as well as vigorous action." [43] In the same spirit he finally asked to be relieved, feeling that the good of the country, as well as justice to himself, demanded that some one else, more trusted, should be in his place.

When his suggestion was accepted, and Meade was substituted for him, the fine side of Hooker's nature again showed itself in the cordial courtesy with which he greeted his successor.[44] It showed itself still more in the request that he might be put back in command of his old division and so continue service with the army. And when this request is disregarded, perhaps wisely for all concerned, nay, even when he is subjected to arrest for the trivial offense of visiting Washington without a pass, he simply writes to the President, with all dignity, requesting an interview in which he may justify himself and set matters once more on the right footing between them.[45]

IV

In following Hooker's later career, in which there is undoubtedly much to criticize, we must always bear in mind what he went through during those first six months of 1863. For a man of his high and imperious spirit to have enjoyed so long the supreme command of " the finest army on this planet," to fail in that command, and then to be reduced to unquestioning submission to men whom he knew to be his juniors and felt to be his inferiors, was a bitter experience. Many who believe in their own genius never get even one try at greatness; but perhaps to get one try and fail, and feel that all hope has utterly slipped away, is even harder still. So it was with Hooker, and who shall blame him if at times he grew restive?

Nevertheless, I believe that he received his orders to go West with a loyal and entire determination to do his duty. According to his view he did it; but it is extraordinarily interesting to study his relations to the various men with whom he came into contact.

His old habit of criticizing and fault-finding seems to have increased rather than lessened. Thus, he condemned freely the proceedings of Rosecrans, which was not unnatural. But he showed equal freedom in discussing the projects of Grant. "No doubt the chaos of Rosecrans's administration is as bad as he describes," writes

Dana; "but he is quite as truculent toward the plan he is now to execute as toward the impotence and confusion of the old régime." [46] The truculence well appears in the general's comment on orders received from Grant in the Chattanooga campaign: "I am not permitted to advance unless I do so without fighting a battle. This puts me in the condition of the boy who was permitted to learn to swim provided he would not go near the water." [47]

On the other hand, Grant, whether imbibing a prejudice from Halleck, or otherwise, did not like Hooker. "Grant also wishes to have both Hooker and Slocum removed from his command," writes Dana again. "Hooker has behaved badly ever since his arrival." [48] There may possibly have been some misunderstanding as to the bad behavior. In this connection there is a curious instance of different points of view. Immediately on Grant's appearance at Chattanooga, Hooker, whether from the warm courtesy of his disposition or from a desire to test the attitude of his superior, sent to invite him to share his own headquarters. Howard, taking a sympathetic view of Hooker's action, expresses surprise and regret at the vehemence of Grant's reply: "If General Hooker wishes to see *me*, he will find me on this train." [49] Wilson, in his "Life of Dana," assumes that Hooker's offer was an impertinence, and thinks the sharp snub of Grant quite justified.[50]

There are plenty of other examples of Grant's

state of mind in regard to his distinguished subordinate. In one endorsement he sneers at Hooker's report of the number of prisoners captured as being more than that captured by the whole army.[51] Elsewhere, he suggests that it would be well if Hooker could be got rid of altogether.[52] But perhaps his harshest criticism is his remark to Young about the battle of Lookout Mountain. "The battle of Lookout Mountain is one of the romances of the war," he said. "There was no such battle, and no action even worthy to be called a battle on Lookout Mountain. It is all poetry." [53]

Now, Lookout Mountain, "the battle above the clouds," is regarded by Hooker's friends as one of his most substantial claims to glory. The little preceding engagement of Wauhatchie is indeed chiefly noticeable because the general came near repeating there his experience with Howard at Chancellorsville. A piece of careless neglect was prevented only by supreme energy from producing disaster. But the taking of the mountain itself, though the action was not extensive, is held by many to have been a skillful and brilliant achievement, and further to have played a conspicuous part in the success of the entire battle of Chattanooga, though, to be sure, a part not contemplated in Grant's plans and therefore, perhaps, treated by him with scant commendation.

It was the same with the Atlanta campaign under Sherman as at Chattanooga. Where there

was fighting, Hooker was always at his best. He got his men into battle and kept them there, either to win, or, when winning was sheer impossibility, to draw off slowly, sullenly, and with terrible loss.

But his defects, like evil angels, walked by him always. Any one who wishes to understand Hooker thoroughly, all his strength and all his weakness, should not fail to read his immensely long confidential letter to Chase, dated December 28, 1863, and printed in the "Official Record";[54] also that to Stanton, of February 25, 1864.[55] All the enthusiasm is there, all the intention of patriotism, all the instinct of generosity and self-sacrifice. But there, also, is the ever-ready disposition to judge others caustically and bitterly, and the fatal habit of putting that judgment into hot and ill-considered words. And there, further, is the most natural but unfortunate sensitiveness springing from the inevitable comparison of the present with the past. "Many of my juniors are in the exercise of independent commands, while I am here with more rank piled on top of me than a man can well stand up under, with a corporal's guard, comparatively, for a command." [56]

In this state of mind it was hardly to be expected that Hooker should work in entire harmony with those about him. He had, indeed, his own loyal followers, like Butterfield, who were always ready to support him with hand and pen. His relations with his immediate chief, Thomas, seem also to

have been cordial, and Thomas speaks of the Lookout battle in very different language from Grant. Of Howard, who so long served under him, Hooker writes at first with kindness, even with enthusiasm, and praises "his zealous and devoted service, not only on the battlefield, but everywhere and at all times." [47]

The record is less agreeable in other cases, however. It is hard to say whether Slocum's abuse of Hooker or Hooker's of Slocum is more violent. Schurz, whose later testimony as to Chancellorsville is so helpful to his chief, attacks him bitterly, and with much apparent justice, in regard to Wauhatchie. Schofield, always diplomatic, implies that Hooker's manœuvres in Georgia were not conducted with very much reference to those with whom he should have coöperated.

But the chief figure in this last act of Hooker's tragedy is Sherman. Most of us will recognize that, with all Sherman's charm and all his vivacity, it must have been a bitter, hard fate to serve under him when you did not like him and he did not like you. Now, Hooker and Sherman had certain points of resemblance which made it difficult for them to get along happily together, at any rate in official relations. From the first there was ill-feeling between them which showed in curious little ways, as in the story of their both coming under a hot fire and refusing to budge, though all their staff, and even the imperturbable Thomas,

had retreated, simply because neither was willing to stir a foot before the other.

That Hooker deserves a share of the blame for this unfortunate state of things cannot be doubted. But how much? Let us consider first the enthusiastic evidence of Colonel Stone: "Hooker's faults were sufficiently apparent; but from the day this campaign opened, I had daily intercourse with him, and no more subordinate or obedient officer served in this army. No matter how unwelcome an order he received, or the time he received it, he was the only one who invariably obeyed it promptly, cheerfully, ungrudgingly. And I saw him at all hours, — day, dawn, and midnight, morning and evening, — and never when he was not ready and anxious to do his whole duty." [58]

This is delightful testimony as to deeds, the hand; but words, the tongue, you remember what it had been while Hooker was with the Army of the Potomac. In the essential letter to Chase, above referred to, written before the Atlanta campaign began, Hooker said: "Sherman is an active, energetic officer, but in judgment is as infirm as Burnside. He will never be successful. Please remember what I tell you." [59] That he expressed these opinions, in season and out of season, where they were sure to do him more injury than his commander, is absolutely proved by the extraordinary letter of warning written by Hooker's nearest friend and supporter, Butterfield. No more admir-

able and more really friendly words were ever addressed by inferior to superior: "You should not speak in the presence of others as you did in my presence and that of Colonel Wood to-day, regarding General Sherman and his operations. . . . I am talking as a friend to you. What I have stated above is substantially charged against you with regard to both McClellan and Burnside. Don't give these accusations further weight by remarks concerning Sherman. . . . I know how hard it is for you to conceal your honest opinions. . . . These opinions travel as 'Hooker's opinions.' Your own staff are impregnated with them, and you will be accused in future by any officer, serving under you, who may fall under your censure, with verbal insubordination. . . . You never were, nor never will be a politic man, . . . but you must be guarded. It will be charged by evil-disposed persons that you are ambitious to fill Sherman's place — not in your hearing or mine — but it is the way of the world, and will be said." [60] However Butterfield may be judged in general, who of us would not esteem himself fortunate to have a friend who would speak like that? And it is to be noted that the toleration of such free speech from any friend is evidence of fine qualities in Hooker himself.

But it did no good. Perhaps it never does. Sherman disliked the words so much that he became very mistrustful of the deeds. He had a tongue of his own and he lashed Hooker with it, as if he

were a schoolboy, and then naïvely explained that he had said less than the occasion demanded. He had his bitter, unworthy sarcasms, also, as when Hooker dilated on his men lost and Sherman sneered, "Oh, most of 'em will be back in a day or two." [61] Finally, when McPherson was killed, Sherman put Howard over Hooker's head into the vacant place.

This was too much and Hooker asked to be relieved. It was a mistake, of course. He was thinking about his dignity. A man always makes a mistake when he thinks about his dignity. He should think about his work, and let others, or, by thinking about his work, make others, think about his dignity. But Hooker was no more perfect in this respect than the rest of us. Therefore, the soldier who was noted for fighting spent the last year of the war in the safe West, where there was no fighting, only petty intrigue, and newspaper riots, and police duty generally. But he was the same old Hooker still. Read the huge letter in which he foams and rages to Stanton over a rumored change of his headquarters and Stanton's quiet snub in three lines: "No order has been made or contemplated transferring headquarters of Northern Department to Columbus. Newspapers are not very good authority for the action of this Department." [62]

So he was a thoroughly human figure, interesting to study because of the intense humanity in his

very faults and mistakes and failures. He was not much besides a soldier; and even as a soldier he was not quite so brilliant as he thought he was, being apparently unequal to independent command. Yet he played a not undistinguished part in the greatest drama of American history, and with all his faults there was something about him of the heroic stamp, something of the boyish, prating, blustering, panic-harboring, death-defying heroes of the Iliad. When I gaze upon Massachusetts's splendid tribute to him, I think, not of the weaknesses, but of the fighting at Williamsburg, and Antietam, and in Georgia, and even more of the prayer to be given his old division back again; of the remark about Howard, "His offense to me was forgotten when he acknowledged it"; [63] best of all, of the frank admission to Doubleday, as to Chancellorsville, more heroic than any fighting: "Doubleday, I was not hurt by a shell, and I was not drunk. For once I lost confidence in Hooker, and that is all there is to it." [64]

What man could desire a finer epitaph than Lincoln's words — and Lincoln knew his subordinate well: "When trouble arises I can always rely on Hooker's magnanimity." [64]

III

GEORGE GORDON MEADE

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Cadiz, Spain, December 31, 1815.
Entered West Point, 1831.
Graduated, 1835.
Resigned from army, 1836.
Married Margaretta Sergeant, December 31, 1840.
Reëntered army, 1842.
1846, 1847, Mexican War.
1856, captain of Topographical Engineers.
August 31, 1861, brigadier-general of volunteers.
During 1862 prominent fighter in Army of Potomac.
June 28, 1863, became commander of Army of Potomac.
July 1, 2, 3, 1863, fought Gettysburg.
Till spring of 1864 commanded Army of Potomac.
Till end of war commanded Army of Potomac under Grant as general-in-chief.
Made major-general in regular army, February 1, 1865.
After war commanded various military departments.
Died, November 6, 1872.

III

GEORGE GORDON MEADE

I

THE name of George Gordon Meade will always be a prominent one in American history. Every American knows that Meade commanded at Gettysburg and that if Gettysburg did not end the war, it at least checked Lee and his victorious army in the full march of triumph so decisively that they never again ventured on vigorous offensive action.

Also, the circumstances of Meade's leadership at Gettysburg much increase his claim to admiration and gratitude. To take an unsuccessful army from an unsuccessful commander and three days after to win a victory over troops like Lee's under a general like Lee was a task that demanded most distinguished qualities of soldiership. This task was imposed upon Meade against his wish; but he accepted it and showed courage and character and brains thoroughly adequate to the occasion.

Yet he remains one of the secondary figures of the war. Men remember anecdotes and phrases and experiences of Grant and Sherman and Sheridan. Of Meade they know nothing but the name. Though nominally in command of the Army of the

Potomac until the end, at the great historic scene of Appomattox he was not even present. As a person he is hazy, hardly distinguished from the multitude. It is of extreme interest to study the causes of this neglect in the nature of the man; and the delightful material now supplied in abundance by the general's recently published "Life and Letters" makes such a study as easy as it is profitable.

The course of Meade's whole biography is clearly elucidated in this ample chronicle, his faithful effort at West Point, where he was graduated in 1835, at the age of nineteen, his patient labor in his vocation of engineering, his creditable service in the Mexican War, his steady advance in the Army of the Potomac until he reached its leadership, and the eclipse of that leadership under Grant during the last year of the war. Meade's admirable letters, chiefly addressed to his wife, reflect all his daily experience, his triumphs and successes as well as failure and discouragement and disappointment.

The careful study of these records, in connection with other testimony, shows many qualities that were calculated to lead to success. In the first place there was a sane and healthy desire for it. It is evident that Meade, like other normal men, longed passionately to get on in the profession he had adopted. "In military matters, as in all things else," he says, "success is the criterion by which

men are judged." [1] When he feels that he has chosen the wrong path and has missed some golden opportunity, his regret is bitter. "I tremble sometimes when I think what I might have been, and remember what I am, when I reflect on what I might have accomplished if I had only devoted all my time and energies to one object, an object where my exertions would have told in my advancement." [2] On the brink of a great struggle he inspires himself with the thought of what victory will bring. "I go into the action to-day as the commander of an army corps. If I survive, my *two* stars are secure, and if I fall, you will have my reputation to live on." [3] And he has a clear and sober consciousness of having deserved such promotion as is likely to come to him. "If most faithful attention to those duties for nearly a year preceding, and activity and energy such as (though I say it myself) have attracted attention from various officers, entitles me to the advancement of one grade, . . . then I can safely appeal to my brother-officers for my credentials in this case." [4]

And the natural corollary of ambition, sensitiveness at being unduly postponed to others, is by no means wanting. A great clamor was raised before Antietam over Reynolds's removal, which put Meade in Reynolds's place as commander of the division of Pennsylvania Reserves. Meade, thereupon, hotly protested that the urgency to have Reynolds back was a slight to him and that if

Reynolds came he should insist on being relieved. The analysis of Meade's state of mind during the last year of the war, when Grant and Sheridan were crowding him out of public notice, is of extreme interest. Recognizing always, with inherent magnanimity, the fine qualities of both generals, never uttering one word of public protest, he yet shows clearly, to his intimate correspondent, the keen susceptibility he cannot overcome. "You may look now for the Army of the Potomac putting laurels on the brows of another rather than your husband." [5] When at last, after the war, the supreme military honor is awarded to Sheridan instead of to himself, his sense of justice revolts in language which shows how deep was the disappointment: "My own sweet love, you can imagine the force of this blow, but . . . we must find consolation in the consciousness . . . that it is the cruelest and meanest act of injustice, and the hope, if there is any sense of wrong or justice in the country, that the man who perpetrated it will some day be made to feel so." [6]

On the other hand, what is most winning about Meade's ambition and desire for success is the moderation and perfect candor that temper it. Cheap notoriety, the current advertising of the newspapers, he detests and will make no effort to obtain it or cater to it. Hasty promotion, reward beyond his deserts, he does not desire, rather deprecates it, as bringing later mortification and re-

gret. Even when things seem to be going against him, he recognizes that it is the fortune of war. "I don't mean to say I have not been badly treated, but I do mean to say I might have been much worse treated, and that my present status is not without advantages and does not justify my being discontented." [7] What could be nobler than his attitude on the first advent of Grant? "I believe Grant is honest and fair, and I have no doubt he will give me full credit for anything I may do, and if I don't deserve any, I don't desire it." [8] While no man ever expressed personal ambition more finely than this quiet soldier in the early days of his campaigning; "I hope the people of the country will appreciate what we have done, and for myself individually, if I get the approbation of those in whose hearts I wish to live, it is all that I ask." [9]

Also, Meade had other qualities that make for greatness more substantially than the mere desire to attain it. He had everywhere and always the deepest sense of duty. When there was work to be done, he was ready to do it, no matter how unsavory or distasteful. Grant bears witness to his subordinate's unfailing earnestness and he adds further that Meade was able to take the plan of another, even when he did not approve of it, and carry it out as zealously as if it were his own. Those who have made some study of the history of the war, North and South, will appreciate how rare a quality this was.

And with the instinct of duty went that of sacrifice. He would sacrifice private feeling. Even when his child was dying, he was unwilling to leave his post. He would sacrifice public advancement. "Sedgwick and Meade," says Grant, "were men so finely formed that if ordered to resign their general's commissions and take service as corporals, they would have fallen into the ranks without a murmur." [10] And he goes on to relate how Meade came to him, when he came East, and offered to give up his position to any other officer that Grant might prefer.

How deeply this instinct of duty and sacrifice was founded in patriotism is understood when we read what Meade has to say about his failure to attack Lee after Gettysburg and again at Mine Run. His military judgment may have been at fault in one or both of these cases, but at least his determination not to be driven from what he thought right by any storm of popular clamor is forever admirable and to be imitated. His own expression of this is so fine that I quote it at length: "It will be proved as clear as the light of day, that an attack was perfectly practicable, and that every one, except myself, in the army, particularly the soldiers, was dying for it, and that I had some mysterious object in view, either in connection with politics, or stock-jobbing, or something else about as foreign to my thought, and finally the Administration will be obliged to yield to popular clamor and

discard me. For all that I am prepared, fortified as I said before by a clear conscience, and the conviction that I have acted from a high sense of duty, to myself as a soldier, to my men as their general, and to my country and its cause, . . . having its vital interests solemnly entrusted to me, which I have no right wantonly to play with and to jeopardize for my own personal benefit, or to satisfy the demands of popular clamor, or interested politicians." [11]

II

In addition to these qualities of moral character which are certainly helpful to greatness, Meade had intelligence of a high order. His mind was perhaps not so vividly and restlessly active as Sherman's; but it was far better balanced. It was perfectly capable of sympathy with all sides and with all interests of life. Though his early and constant preoccupation with practical matters left him little time for purely intellectual pursuits, it is evident that he turned to such pursuits by natural instinct. In one of his letters he expresses deep regret at being cut off from the enjoyment of music.[12] In another he shows genuine literary sense by his criticism of the detestable jingle of Lytton's "Lucile," then running its brief course of popularity.[13]

In everything relating to the practical affairs of life, the calm lucidity, the broad balance of

Meade's intellect make themselves constantly and gratefully felt. When decision is needed, he is always ready to decide. There is no doubt or questioning when doubt and questioning are out of place. Thus, though he disapproved totally of the Mexican War from a political point of view, he felt that, once in, we should prosecute it with all the energy of which the nation was capable. "Let us show a bold and united front, forget *party* for an instant; now that we are in the war, prosecute it with all possible vigor, not in talk but in acts; . . . let [Mexico] see we are determined to carry everything before us; and you may rest assured that if she is ever going to make peace, she will do it then, and not till then." [14] Yet this zeal and efficiency in action are always tempered by a really remarkable power of rising above the immediate present, of seeing things in their larger aspects and their manifold phases, of recognizing the good intention and earnest purpose of an adversary, even when you are opposing him with all your might. No man fought the Civil War with steadier conviction than Meade. But no man showed a larger or more sympathetic tolerance and charity before the war and during it and after it.

So in military matters, what distinguishes Meade above everything else, and gives him his enduring claim to respect, is brains. It may be remarked that this was the claim of Moltke, also, who is considered to have been something of a

general. It was not that Meade had a vivid and fertile imagination, but he saw possibilities, weighed them, and adopted or rejected them on all their merits. He was "not original in devising brilliant plans," says Colonel W. R. Livermore; "but his clear understanding enabled him to discriminate between the plans of others." [15]

Of course intelligence, disproportionately developed, has its grave military dangers. It is not always well to see all the possibilities too clearly. Meade himself, with that gift we all have of sooner or later defining ourselves, says somewhere, "I am a *juste milieu* man." [16] Now a *juste milieu* man, one who keeps the middle of the traveled road, sometimes balances too well, sometimes errs by excess of caution, sometimes hesitates to take the chances which one blinder or less far-seeing would take in ignorance and come out with dazzling triumph. It was this weakness, if it was a weakness, which induced Meade to provide for the possibility of retreat from Gettysburg and kept him from attacking after the battle, this which prevented him from pursuing Lee with the headlong vigor which the nation demanded, this which, in October, 1863, brought upon him the reproach of Halleck and the pleading of Lincoln. "If General Meade can now attack him [Lee] on a field no more than equal for us," wrote the President, "and will do so with all the skill and courage which he, his officers, and men possess, the honor

will be his, if he succeeds, and the blame may be mine, if he fails." [17]

To this appeal Meade answered, "It has been my intention to attack the enemy, if I can find him on a field no more than equal for us, and that I have only delayed doing so from the difficulty of ascertaining his exact position, and the fear that in endeavoring to do so my communications might be jeopardized." [18] It may be that too keen intelligence in the apprehension of possibilities here did the general an injury, but I repeat he at least showed courage in acting on his own judgment alone and not surrendering it to any pressure from others.

Also there are those who believe that that judgment was usually correct, and who agree with General Hunt as to Gettysburg in particular. "He was right in his orders as to Pipe Creek; right, in his determination under certain circumstances to fall back to it; right, in pushing up to Gettysburg after the battle; right, in remaining there; right, in not attempting to counter-attack at any stage of the battle; right, as to his pursuit of Lee." [19] In the opinion of these critics, at any rate, it has never yet been shown and never can be shown that, if Meade had been supported as Grant was and supplied as Grant was, he would not have accomplished quite as much as Grant.

What is most of all attractive about Meade's intellectual make-up is his absolute candor. There

is no bluff, no swagger, no pretension, no attempt to throw dust in the eyes of posterity. He debates and analyzes his own mistakes just as freely and frankly as he would those of another. And when one has read thousands of pages of self-justification by great commanders on both sides, one appreciates how rare such candor is. Take this admirable passage from the official report of the Mine Run campaign, in which the general discusses the arguments for and against his own conduct as calmly and earnestly as if he were pleading in the naked, quiet chamber of his conscience: "It may be said that I should not depend on the judgment of others, but it is impossible a commanding general can reconnoitre in person a line of over seven miles in extent, and act on his own judgment as to the expediency of attacking or not. Again, it may be said that the effort should have been made to test the value of my judgment, or, in other words, that I should encounter what I believed to be certain defeat, so as to prove conclusively that victory was impossible. Considering how sacred is the trust of the lives of the brave men under my command, but willing as I am to shed their blood and my own where duty requires, and my judgment dictates that the sacrifice will not be in vain, I cannot be a party to a wanton slaughter of my troops for any mere personal end." [20]

III

With these great moral and intellectual qualities, which should have insured success and glory, Meade unfortunately combined some others that were less helpful. These latter were not in themselves all positive defects, indeed very much the contrary. Some of them were the most charming elements in the general's character and remind one forcibly of the words of Shakespeare, —

> "There is a sort of men
> Whose graces serve them but as enemies."

For instance, all through Meade's career we find a singular modesty, almost amounting to self-distrust, and this, I assure you, is a trait so rare in Civil War history as to attract attention and admiration at once. I have now spent fifteen years in the study of these practical natures who did things, either in war or statesmanship, and I begin positively to thirst for spirits of another type. The achievement of great matters brings out splendid qualities, keen insight, quick decision, the neglect of slight things for what is truly essential. But it also develops and necessarily requires a self-confidence which, repeated in a thousand various phases, becomes intolerably wearisome. The highest order of genius, Lincoln's or Lee's, can do things without this self-assurance; but in greater or less degree it is apt to permeate practical minds of a narrower type.

Now Meade was as modest as Lincoln or Lee, and in his position excessive modesty kept him out of the public view and gave others much less deserving a chance to elbow past him in the race for honor.

Not that Meade was without a due pride and just sense of the value of his ability and achievements. In the midst of later disappointment and discouragement, his heart thrills when he thinks of Gettysburg. Even his enemies, he says, acknowledge that Gettysburg was one of the greatest victories the world has ever seen, though some of them believe it would have been greater if he had not been there. And he frankly declares that, "as I reflect on that eventful period, and all that has elapsed since, I have reason to be satisfied with my course, and cause to be most thankful. The longer this war continues the more will Gettysburg and its results be appreciated." [21]

Nor was he inclined to underrate himself as compared with others. He playfully deprecates his wife's enthusiasm, declaring that he is no more than a common soldier doing his duty; yet, lest she should take him too closely at his word, he adds with just and manly dignity, "One thing, however, I am willing to admit, and that is, that I consider myself as good as most of my neighbors and without great vanity may say that I believe myself to be better than some who are much higher."

But no man was more ready to admit his own

deficiencies. As we have seen above, when he failed he did not waste a moment forging excuses or unloading blame on to others. He went right straight to the causes of failure and if he found them in himself, he said so. When he receives honorable mention, he notes that there is a great deal of accident about it and that many who missed it have done quite as much as he. When he is put forward prominently as the victor of Gettysburg, he points out that chance has its mighty share in all great victories and that he had better abstain from bragging until his future is more secure. And I have met with few commanders on either side who could have penned the simple sentence in which he recounts one of his adventures with Lee. "This was a deep game, and I am free to admit that in the playing of it he has got the advantage of me." [22]

Finest of all, as illustrating this natural instinct of self-distrust, is Meade's shrinking from supreme command. Everywhere one finds men hurt and injured because not entrusted with positions equal to their merits; but the instances of those who had rank enough and feared more are rare indeed. Meade was certainly one of them. It is not only that he balked when the command of the Army of the Potomac was actually thrust upon him. The boldest might have done that under the circumstances. But months before he writes to his wife in the most intimate frankness of self-confession: "Your anxiety lest I should be placed in command

of the army causes me to smile. Still, I must confess when such men as Gibbon say it is talked about, it really does look serious and alarming; yet, when I look back on the good fortune which has thus far attended my career, I cannot believe so sudden a change for the worse can occur as would happen if I were placed in command." [23] The absolute sincerity of this cannot be questioned, and I say that to turn to it from the loud petulance of so many who are eager to better themselves is like stepping from the clatter of cities into the quiet of green fields.

And as he was too modest to thrust himself into the glare of glory, so Meade had another grace inimical to the greatest success of a soldier: he was a lover of peace. It is worth noting that none of the men of the very first rank on either side in the war were of the roaring, swash-buckler type, which prates about the pleasure of fighting in itself. Grant and Thomas, Lee and the two Johnstons were quiet gentlemen. Sherman was certainly not quiet, but he was anything but a boisterous roarer. And so far Meade is in excellent company. But he differed from all these I have named in that he took little or no pleasure in his profession, in fact found it positively distasteful in most of its aspects. "He was not a soldier by instinct," says Colonel W. R. Livermore,[24] and only repeats what Meade was constantly saying himself.

Understand me. I do not for a moment suggest

anything so absurd as that Meade was lacking in personal courage. He had probably as high moral control over his nerves as a man of such sensitive temperament ever possessed. Splendid stories are told of his coolness in action and by some who were not favorable to him. Read Butterfield's account of the general's sitting quietly, at the crisis of Gettysburg, with the shells bursting all about him, telling stories to the young officers of his early adventures and experiences. "The world might naturally suppose that with the immense responsibility so suddenly placed upon him unsought and unexpected, Meade might have been a trifle nervous or excited. If he was, he never betrayed it." [25] Read, again, Horace Porter's description of the general in battle, his sharp, ringing orders, his intense energy of courage and movement, his quick comprehension of the conduct of all his subordinates and intelligent adjustment of their actions to each other.

Yet, if you examine his heart carefully, as it is laid bare in the long process of his correspondence, you will agree with Colonel Livermore that he was not a soldier by instinct. Why, even at the beginning he went to West Point as it were accidentally and against his inclination. He had none of the drum-and-fife fever which makes so many boys soldiers before they know it. He was a thinker, a scholar. The drill at the Academy, the endless repetition of technique, indispensable but monot-

onous, bored him unspeakably. He longed to be out of the army before he was fairly in it. Years later, in Mexico, he enlarges with energetic disgust on the same tedious features of actual military life. "A camp where is no active service is a dull and stupid place, nothing but drill and parades, and your ears filled all day with drumming and fifeing. All this is very pretty for such as have never seen it, but fifteen years of such business takes off the edge of novelty." [26]

He was delicate in health, too, and the hardships of camp life were a trial to him. He bore them without complaint, but he grew infinitely tired of them. "Do not be frightened about me, but the sight of two gentlemen so sick, with no friendly hand near them, no accommodation of any kind whatever in a flimsy tent, made me feel badly, not only for them, but for myself, in anticipation of being similarly situated. Still, I trust I shall keep well, and if taking care of myself will do it, I am certain of it." [27] He does not seem much exhilarated with the enthusiasm of a soldier's career, does he? And in Mexico, where this was written, in the prime of strength and vigor, he grows so homesick, so stricken with longing for home and the presence of those he loves, that he is prevented from resigning only by the thought that honor will not allow him to do so in the face of approaching conflict.

Honor only, you observe; for all the excitement, all the inspiration, which so many soldiers feel

in actual battle, was apparently omitted from Meade's character. The fighting fury of Jackson and Sheridan and Stuart, even the intoxication which Lee indicated when he said, "It is well that this is so terrible, or else we might grow fond of it," [28] seem utterly foreign to this quiet scholar who fought as he did problems in arithmetic. There was little spirit of adventure in the man who wrote, "Before Colonel Cross's death [Cross was ambushed and murdered by the Mexicans], it was usual for the officers to ride in all directions, hunting and for exercise, but I never went more than two miles, always with a party, and always on open ground, where I had a fair view of everything around me." [29] Falkland, whom Meade in some points resembles, could not, in Clarendon's strange phrase, *ingeminate* "Peace! Peace!" with a more thirsty longing than did Meade at an early period in the war. "Peace — oh, what a glorious word, and how sweet and delightful would its realization be to me!" [30] And one sentence sums up this whole attitude of mind with conclusive emphasis, "I like fighting as little as any man." [31] You will agree, I think, that this is a singular utterance for a great soldier.

IV

Besides these attractive qualities, modesty and the love of peace, which unfitted him for popular military success, Meade had one positive defect,

and that was his inability to win men. He had a number of warm friends among the more intelligent higher officers, he had the esteem of many; but his subordinates generally did not love him, even when they trusted him, and he had no faculty whatever of inspiring an army with that personal enthusiasm which, while it may not bring victory without great generalship, is almost essential to give great generalship permanent triumph.

This lack of gift for dealing with his military inferiors did not come from insufficient judgment or insight. On the contrary, Meade's calm, clear, just intelligence shows in nothing more than in his fine appreciation of the characters of men. This appears admirably, so far back as the Mexican War, in his comments on his fellow officers. It appears still more, during the Civil War, in all he writes of the great number of distinguished soldiers with whom he was brought into contact. His judgments of McClellan, of Burnside, of Hooker, remain perhaps the most illuminating of any that we have, not exempt from severity, where severity is required, but absolutely free from jealousy and inclining to emphasize good qualities, whenever possible. This recognition of the good is especially noticeable with Sheridan and Grant, whom Meade had certainly no reason to love, but whom he analyzes with the most kindly and generous discrimination.

It is possible that Meade read men too well to be

popular with them. The first lesson of practical life is that to be on good terms with people we must treat them as if we thought a little better of them than we really do. Though Meade was thoroughly democratic in principle, it is not certain that he cared very much about being on good terms with the generality. It is certain that he was not one to disguise the truth for the sake of being on good terms with anybody.

Whatever the reason, he had friction with too many. Perhaps his difficulties with Sickles and Butterfield were natural. These were men of an altogether different stamp. But he quarreled with Warren — and made it up; quarreled with Sheridan, even with the generally amiable Burnside, and did not make it up. There were others with whom he did not quarrel, but who simply felt that they would much prefer to serve under somebody else. And this is not a favorable state of mind in war. Little things often indicate great defects. I know nothing that better reveals Meade's tactlessness than General Schaff's excellent account of the general's horse. The animal had a gait which was neither a walk nor a trot and which made it impossible for others to keep pace with him — a "fox-walk" General Schaff aptly calls it, and adds that members of the staff were often heard to say, "Damn that horse of Meade's! I wish he would either go faster or slower!" [82] "I fear that Meade rode through life at something of a "fox-walk."

Also, it is pretty substantially proved that under great stress his nerves would break in unfortunate fits of temper. We read of the great Condé that in ordinary converse he was harsh and rough with his subordinates, but that under fire his manners were restrained into an exquisite courtesy. Just the opposite appears to have been the case with Meade. At the mess and the camp-fire he treated his staff like a cultured gentleman, but in battle, especially if they brought bad news, he rated them as if they were schoolboys, swore, if need be, and in general so comported himself that men preferred not to approach him, if it could be avoided. "A battle always put him in a fury," says Grant. "He raged from the beginning to the end. His own staff officers would dread to bring him a report of anything wrong. Meade's anger would overflow on the heads of his nearest and best friends." [33]

Meade's biographers reject evidence of this sort coming from Grant and his followers — for instance, Dana and Horace Porter — as somewhat suspicious, and no doubt with these reporters there was some exaggeration. But there are plenty of other witnesses. General Schaff has no prejudice against Meade; yet he, too, writes: "I have seen him so cross and ugly that no one dared to speak to him — in fact, at such times his staff and everybody else kept as clear of him as possible." [34]

The most striking written indication we have of this weakness of Meade's is his tactless message to

Burnside at the time of the mine disaster: "Do you mean to say your officers and men will not obey your orders to advance? If not, what is the obstacle? I wish to know the truth and desire an immediate answer." [85] To which Burnside, with natural if somewhat exaggerated sensibility, replied: "I have never in any report said anything different from what I conceived to be the truth. Were it not insubordinate I would say that the latter remark of your note was unofficerlike and ungentlemanly." [86] And thus the reply churlish breeds ever the countercheck quarrelsome.

When I read all these things, I turn to Meade's portrait, and begin to understand it. The high intelligence is under the high forehead. The stern brows and eagle nose mark the unquailing courage. There are lines of sensitiveness, lines of possible sympathy. But it is not the face of a man men love.

A medical officer came to Meade at some not very fortunate moment and complained that the soldiers were calling him "Old Pills" and he wanted it stopped. Meade clapped on his great eyeglasses, glared furiously at the complainant, and snarled, "Well, what of that? How can I prevent it? Why, I hear that, when I rode out the other day, some of the men called me a 'd——d old goggle-eyed snapping turtle.'" [87]

A d——d old goggle-eyed snapping turtle! A man had ever so much rather be called the savior

GEORGE GORDON MEADE

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of his country, had n't he? But these soldiers are so keen-sighted and so abominably outspoken!

The ill-temper, the irritability, however, were only superficial, only the outcome of overwrought nerves stretched to the point of cracking. Every one recognizes that after such a crisis the general was most eager and cordial in his expression of regret. Moreover, General Schaff adds that "as the campaign progressed, with its frightful carnage and disappointment, his temper grew fiercer";[38] and this not only explains any apparent inconsistency in the anecdote of coolness at Gettysburg above narrated but much besides. It reminds us that Meade was working under difficulties that would have strained a far more phlegmatic disposition. After he had held for months the sole command of that magnificent army, he was suddenly subjected to the absolute control of Grant, a control kindly exercised, but most galling, to say the least. If the head of the Army of the Potomac wished to leave his post for a day, he was obliged humbly to beg permission of his superior. Such outbursts of wrath as he poured upon Sheridan are perhaps inexcusable. They are perfectly explicable when we consider that Sheridan was so supported by the highest authorities, that he had the impudence to speak to his nominal commander in the following fashion: "I told him that since he insisted on giving the cavalry directions without consulting or even notifying me, he could hence-

forth command the cavalry corps himself — that I would not give it another order." [39] For such a reply, in any European army, the impetuous Irishman would probably have been shot.

Through all these immense difficulties, in spite of superficial irritation, Meade bore himself with a fundamental patience and dignity which we cannot fail to admire. Again and again he declares his humble, earnest wish to do his duty and his utter disregard of personal advantage. No finer letter was written during the war than that in which he expresses to Halleck his willingness to be treated as a mere instrument for the welfare of the cause all were desirous to serve. "I take this occasion to say to you and through you to the President, that I have no pretensions to any superior capacity for the post he has assigned me to; that all I can do is to exert my utmost efforts and do the best I can; but that the moment those who have a right to judge my actions think or feel satisfied, either that I am wanting or that another would do better, that moment I earnestly desire to be relieved, not on my own account, but on account of the country and the cause." [40]

V

So we return to what is attractive about Meade, to what is charming; for however unapproachable he may have been in official relations, no one can read his letters without being drawn to him,

without feeling a singular attachment for one so simple, so large-hearted, so sincere. It is very curious that you might study the biography carefully without getting the least intimation of faults of temper, and this seems to indicate that those faults were somewhat less radical than many would have us believe. The only hint of anything of the kind is the sharp scene with a newspaper man, when temper was surely justified, if ever. "I asked his authority; he said it was the talk of the camp. I told him it was a base and wicked lie, and that I would make an example of him which should not only serve to deter others from committing like offenses, but would give publicity to his lie and the truth." [a] And the general ordered the offender paraded through the army, with a placard stating that he was a "Libeler of the Press." It is believed by some that this incident occasioned a prejudice and even a conspiracy among the newspaper men which afterwards worked greatly to the disadvantage of Meade.

On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that in general social intercourse Meade could be very attractive. His broad and trained intelligence made his conversation full of interest. His manners were easy and courteous. And General Schaff emphasizes the peculiarly sensitive, refined, and sympathetic quality of his voice.

But it is in his family relations that the general's charm is felt most. His letters to his wife have

not one atom of sentimentality; but they have unusual tenderness and winning warmth of affection. Every detail of his children's growth and education interests him and his longing to be with them is sometimes so great that he is almost ready to forget duty and even honor. "At night, when I thought of seeing you and my dear children . . . I would be almost crazy, and determined the next morning I would go and get my leave." [42] His respect and esteem for his wife show in the habit of referring every question, even those connected with his profession, to her sympathy and judgment, and his deep devotion expresses itself often in passages like the following: "Do you know, to-day is our wedding-day and my birthday. Twenty-one years ago we pledged our faith to each other, and I doubt if any other couple live who, with all the ups and downs of life, have had more happiness with each other than you and I." [43]

The intimate self-revelation of these domestic letters shows in the writer of them a singular simplicity and single-heartedness, which are quite irresistible. Like many men of great intellectual power, Meade seemed to analyze himself with as perfect frankness as he would have done any one else. I have already indicated this in regard to military matters, but it is even more attractive as to personal experience. When he is about to be set aside, he notes the fact with perfect candor of acceptance. "My *time* I suppose has passed, and

I must now content myself with doing my duty unnoticed." [44] When a great crisis is at hand, he writes down quietly his own fears and tremors: "Sometimes I have a little sinking at the heart, when I reflect that perhaps I may fail at the grand scratch; but I try to console myself with the belief that I shall probably do as well as most of my neighbors, and that your firm faith must be founded on some reasonable groundwork." [45] But the most charming illustration of this personal candor is the general's comment when his friend Reynolds is to be put over him. Few men would let such a remark go beyond their own conscience, and many would not be honest enough to admit it even there. "As yet the order has not been issued, but when it comes I shall subside gracefully into a division commander, though frankness compels me to say, I do wish Reynolds had stayed away, and that I could have had a chance to command a corps in action. Perhaps it may yet occur." [46] And again, in a little different connection: "I envied Reynolds when he left for Harrisburg, and secretly thought the Governor might have applied for me." [47] Now that I call a ravishing bit of human nature.

The truth is, Meade could afford to be frank, because he had nothing to conceal. Few men have built their lives upon a broader foundation of dignity, of purity, of courage, of faithful devotion to duty. His religious interests are certainly neither

obtrusive nor excessive. But they were evidently very deep, very genuine, and very vital in their influence. At times they become almost naïve, as where he inclines to think that his leg was saved by special interposition of the providence of God. But usually there is a grave and solemn earnestness about them which admirably fits the solid, loyal temper of the man. "I thought, too, of how I was preserved then and since in many perilous times through God's mercy and will, and prayed He would continue His gracious protection to me, and in His own good time restore me to you, or if this was not His will, and it was decreed that I was to be summoned, that He would forgive me, for His Son's sake, the infinite number of sins I have all my life been committing." [48]

One bitter sentence, wrung from Meade in the hour of neglect, deserves particular attention: "Don't worry yourself about this, treat it with contempt. It cannot be remedied, and we should be resigned. I don't believe the truth will ever be known, and I have a great contempt for History." [49] This is contrary to what is usually asserted. Most neglected heroes console themselves with the thought that history will set everything right. Will it?

Without going too much into the general question, I think it may be maintained that there is always some cause for a great reputation. When a man is lauded by his contemporaries and by

posterity, there is some reason for it. What is puzzling, and what seems to justify Meade, is that the cause is so often inadequate to the result. A man may have splendid gifts, gifts of the highest value to the world, and be known only to few, while one who has a fine figure and a tongue and can drink a cocktail cordially may get laurels and a statue. It was something so with Meade. He had a dozen great qualities. But because he had not the gift of drawing men after him, he is outshone in popular remembrance, not only by such leaders as Sherman and Thomas and Lee, but even by lesser figures, like McClellan and Sheridan.

He was just simply the man who fought Gettysburg. After all, perhaps that is something.

IV

GEORGE HENRY THOMAS

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Southampton County, Virginia, July 31, 1816.
Studied law at nineteen.
Graduated at West Point, 1840.
Served in Florida, 1841.
Mexican War, 1846, 1847.
Instructor at West Point, 1851.
Married Frances L. Kellogg, November 17, 1852.
Served in West, 1854 to 1860.
Colonel, May 3, 1861.
Brigadier-general of volunteers, August 31, 1861.
Commanded at Mill Spring, January, 1862.
Major-general of volunteers, April 25, 1862.
Distinguished at Chickamauga, September, 1863.
With Sherman in Atlanta campaign.
Wins battle of Nashville, December, 1864.
Major-general regular army, December 24, 1864.
Commanded military division of the Tennessee, June, 1865.
Commanded military division of the Pacific, June, 1869.
Died, March 28, 1870.

IV

GEORGE HENRY THOMAS

I

THOMAS ranks among the highest as a general and is most winning as a man. But the fact that, although a Virginian, he remained true to the Union and fought against his State and family and friends gives perhaps the chief interest to the study of his character and mode of thought.

It will be advantageous to begin by presenting in the abstract all the arguments that appear to justify a military man in such a position.

First, there is the oath of allegiance. In all countries and under all governments it has always been held that the officer is bound to follow his flag, that he has accepted training and support under the constituted authorities, and that he is pledged to render obedience and to offer all his efforts and his life to carrying out the orders that come to him from his lawful superior. A man's conscience is, of course, higher than his military duty, but the instances where the two should be separated are very rare indeed.

In the case of our Civil War there was a great deal more to the question than mere mechanical loyalty. For nearly a hundred years the Union

had grown and flourished, in spite of sharp political disputes. The possibilities of future expansion and prosperity were enormous. It needed but little prophetic vision to look forward to wealth and happiness for coming generations such as the world had hardly ever seen before. But a man who knew what war was and what armies were and what military government was did not need to be told that such a future would be out of the question, if the Union were shattered into fragments. To a man with that knowledge the attempt to break up the Union was fatal, intolerable folly. This was what Robert E. Lee meant when he said: "I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union." [1] And again: "Secession is nothing but revolution." [2] And yet again: "It is idle to talk of secession. Anarchy would have been established, and not a government, by Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, and the other patriots of the Revolution." [3]

It was not only the future of the United States that was involved, but the future of democracy. Those who urged secession claimed to be defending popular government against a usurping executive. In reality nothing could show more clearly the danger of centralization in a republic than the history of the Confederacy. And the government which was founded on state rights ended in a tragic — or comic — exhibition of building a strong central authority on state wrongs. Every

one who longed passionately for the success of free institutions must have appreciated that there could be no greater danger to such institutions than the establishment of two, or a dozen, confederacies watching perpetually in armed eagerness to cut each other's throats. A striking illustration of how forcibly this was felt by outsiders appears in a speech made by Disraeli in 1863, less often quoted than some English utterances of that time: "After the conclusion of the war we will see a different America from that which was known to our fathers and from that even of which this generation has had so much experience. It will, I believe, be an America of diplomacy, it will be an America of rival States and of manœuvring cabinets, of frequent turbulence and frequent wars." [4] You perceive from what the good Lord, working through Thomas and others like him, delivered us.

And if this was the patriotic view of a broad-minded American, it might have been equally the view of a loyal Virginian. What was fatal to the whole could not well be advantageous to the parts. If the preservation of the Union meant peace, freedom, and popular government for Maine, Illinois, and California, it meant the same thing for Virginia, and the destruction of the Union meant an abyss of possible disaster for Virginia also.

Writing formerly of General Lee, I had occasion to say that in the apparently most remote contingency of a secession of Massachusetts or of New

England, I should follow my State even if the cause of secession did not meet with my approval. I now repeat the statement without hesitating in the slightest. The love of home, the might of ancestral tradition, New England habits of thought and habits of affection are too deeply rooted in every fibre of my heart for me to take any risk of being exiled from them perpetually. But it may easily be maintained that one who followed a different course would show a broader, a more far-seeing, a more self-sacrificing patriotism, even as a New Englander.

Reasoning from analogy is always defective and often misleading, but when Southerners say, with Captain McCabe, that Thomas turned his back on Virginia in the hour of her sorest need, I am tempted to put the matter thus: If a man sees his mother about to commit suicide in a fit of temporary insanity, which is more truly filial, that he should stand reverently and watch her do it, or that he should do his best to restrain her, even with a certain amount of brutal violence?

So much for the line of argument that Thomas might have used. How far did he actually use it? Nobody knows. His numerous admirers are ready and eager to tell us what they thought, what they think he ought to have thought and must have thought. But the reliable evidence as to his own mental processes is meagre in the extreme.

One thing we can say at starting, as positively

as we can speak of any human motive. It is alleged that Thomas was governed by considerations of personal advancement and promotion. The same thing has been alleged in regard to Lee, and with just as much truth in one case as in the other. The characters of both men absolutely preclude the assignment, even the consideration, of anything so contemptible.

Further, Thomas is said to have been influenced by his wife, who was a New York woman. Probably he was, though Mrs. Thomas makes the almost incomprehensible assertion that "never a word passed between General Thomas and myself, or any one of the family, upon the subject of his remaining loyal to the United States Government."[5] I say "almost incomprehensible" because the general spent the greatest part of the fierce winter of 1860–61, when everybody was talking politics, with his wife in New York. And I repeat, probably he was influenced. Who is not, by his surroundings and by those he loves? Does any one believe that Lee was not influenced by Mrs. Lee and by his friends and family? But that either of these men could be persuaded to do anything he thought wrong, by his wife or by any one else, is a mere figment of prejudice and party passion.

What actual evidence we have, however, as to Thomas's attitude in that trying time goes practically all one way and, I think, shows beyond ques-

tion that he had his hour of doubt and difficulty. The story, widely current at the South, that Thomas wrote to the Confederate authorities to know how high rank would be given him if he joined them, may be rejected at once, on Thomas's own vehement statement,[6] and was merely a misinterpretation of documents to be considered shortly. The explicit testimony of Fitzhugh Lee, that Thomas told him in New York, early in 1861,[7] that he intended to resign, cannot, of course, be for one moment disputed as to intentional veracity. It is possible, however, that Lee, in his own enthusiasm, may have taken Thomas more positively than was meant. Evidence less likely to be questioned by Northerners is furnished by Keyes, who knew Thomas well before the war and regarded him with the greatest esteem and affection. Keyes attributes the general's final decision to his wife and adds, "Had he followed his own inclinations, he would have joined the Confederates, and fought against the North with the same ability and valor that he displayed in our cause."[8]

Further, there are two letters of Thomas which have a very interesting connection with the point we are discussing. On January 18, 1861, he wrote to the superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute, the school in which Jackson was an instructor and which bore something the same relation to the State that West Point bears to the nation, as follows: "In looking over the files

of the 'National Intelligencer' this morning, I met with your advertisement for a commandant of cadets and instructor of tactics at the Institute. If not already filled, I will be under obligations if you will inform me what salary and allowances pertain to the situation, as from present appearances I feel it will soon be necessary for me to be looking up some means of support." [9]

It is urged by Thomas's biographers that this letter has no political significance whatever, that the general was at that time doubtful about the effects of a severe injury recently received which he thought might disable him for further active service.

This explanation may be correct, but it must be admitted that the coincidence is singular and unfortunate. It becomes much more so, when we weigh the language of another letter, written on March 12, 1861. Governor Letcher, of Virginia, had caused the position of chief of ordnance of the State to be offered to Thomas, if he would resign from the United States service. Thomas replies: "I have the honor to state, after expressing my most sincere thanks for your very kind offer, that it is not my wish to leave the service of the United States as long as it is honorable for me to remain in it, and therefore as long as my native State, Virginia, remains in the Union, it is my purpose to remain in the Army unless required to perform duties alike repulsive to honor and humanity." [10]

Here we have almost the identical words of Lee as to the Union, written at about the same time: "I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation." [11]

Also, we have a private letter, less authoritative than these official documents, but even more convincing, if accepted. In Dr. Wyeth's "With Sabre and Scalpel," there is printed a letter from Miss Fannie C. Thomas, sister of the general, dated November 2, 1900, which runs as follows: "With regard to the visit of General Thomas, I have to say he arrived at the home [the Thomas homestead in Southampton, Virginia], the fifteenth of December, 1860, and remained until the eighth of January, 1861, I believe. While here he said he should side with the South and my sister says tell you the last word he said to her at parting was he should be back in March. He had much of his army baggage sent here and left it, wishing it to be stored in the house, implying he would return for it, and it would be ready for his use; he also brought his servants and left them in my sister's care until such time as he and his wife might require the services of the cook, whom Mrs. Thomas wished to retain. The above are facts." [12]

In view of all this evidence, I do not see how any unprejudiced person can doubt that up to the middle of March, at any rate, Thomas was divided between his loyalty to the Union and his loyalty to Virginia. The only shred of actual testimony against

this is Colonel Hough's report of a conversation in which his chief declared that "his duty was clear from the beginning." [15] But this conversation occurred long after the struggle was over, when time and bitter memories had accentuated everything, and in using the phrase, "from the beginning," the general may possibly have had in mind only the actual beginning of the war. To me the comment of Grant, who must have spoken from reliable hearsay, if not from personal knowledge, seems a perfectly satisfactory statement of the case: "When the war was coming, Thomas felt like a Virginian, and talked like one, and had all the sentiment then so prevalent about the rights of slavery and sovereign States and so on. But the more Thomas thought it over, the more he saw the crime of treason behind it all." [16]

And why should any one blame him for hesitation in the matter? If he was a man, with a man's heart, and not a mere military machine, was he not bound to hesitate? The point would not be worth the space I have given it, if it were not for the folly of Northern apologists on the one hand, who insist that their hero must always have thought as they did, and for the cruelty of Southern partisans on the other, who insinuate ignoble motives where there is no possible foundation for them. Whatever may have been Thomas's doubts when the dispute was in a theoretical stage, the guns at Sumter settled the question for him.

When he heard that echo, he wrote to his wife words, which, though only indirectly quoted for us, are equally significant of his decision and of his previous indecision: "Whichever way he turned the matter over in his mind, his oath of allegiance to his Government always came uppermost." [15]

A few days later than this, in the very interesting letter of Fitz John Porter, printed in the "Official Record," [16] we see Thomas assisting to hold others to their duty, and from that time on there is no indication of the faintest wavering or regret, any more than there is with Lee, who had chosen the other side after a bitter struggle of his own. Indeed, with the progress of the war, Thomas's language in regard to rebels and rebellion becomes more and more energetic, as appears in one very curious passage as to desertion, written in April, 1864: "I believe many of them return to the enemy after recruiting their health and strength, because they are rebels by nature; others because of family influence, and others like the drunkard to his bottle, because they have not sufficient moral firmness to resist the natural depravity of their hearts." [17] In the last clause I think we trace what Thomas would have felt to be the just analysis of his own psychological experience.

As shown by Grant's remark above quoted, Thomas's attitude before the war in regard to the great question of slavery was probably that of the average moderate Southerner. He was never an

extensive slaveholder. But while in Texas he purchased a slave woman for actual needs of service, and rather than sell her again into the hands of strangers, he sent her home to Virginia, at very considerable expense and inconvenience.

II

The difficulty we have met with in getting at Thomas's state of mind during the critical months of 1861 forms an excellent introduction to the study of his character. There is the same difficulty in getting at his state of mind at any other time. He was very insistent that none of his private letters should be published after his death, and very few have been. His official correspondence is extensive; but it is singularly formal in character and tells us almost nothing about the man's soul, except that such reserve is in itself significant and that even trifling hints of self-revelation become valuable in such a scarcity. Thus, a letter that begins, "Dear Sherman," is almost startling in its contrast with the usual staid formulæ of subordinate respect.

Not only in letters, but in everything was Thomas reserved, self-contained, self-controlled. "A boy of few words and of an excellent spirit," [18] was about all the information that his biographer could gather as to his childhood. At West Point, where he was graduated in 1840, in the Indian campaigns, during the Mexican War, in which he

distinguished himself greatly, and through the interval till the Civil War came, there is a similar record: quiet, faithful service, and no more said than was necessary, a strong, calm, patient, dignified soldier, ready alike for good and evil fortune. Nor did he appear differently throughout the great conflict, from his first victory at Mill Springs, in January, 1862, through Shiloh and Perryville and Murfreesboro and Chickamauga and Chattanooga and Atlanta, to the last victory at Nashville, one of the most skillful and decisive battles of history. Everywhere it was a question of deeds, not of words, of accomplishing the task set and making as little fuss about it as possible. Everywhere there was shrinking from cheap publicity and the advertising through self or others which did more for some war reputations than great fighting. When asked to become a candidate for the presidency after the war, Thomas declined, giving as one reason: "I can never consent, voluntarily, to place myself in a position where scurrilous newspaper men and political demagogues can make free with my personal character and reputation, with impunity." [19]

The advantages of this splendid poise and self-contained power in Thomas's character deserve analysis in many ways. Let us consider the negative advantages first. For one thing, Thomas was free from overconfidence. He did not press eagerly into undertakings beyond his strength and conse-

quently he and his army were saved the humiliation and demoralization that come from drawing back. Moreover, Thomas avoided the brag and bluster which disfigure the glory of so many really able soldiers. He may have felt in his heart that he could do great things, but he did not proclaim it. Indeed, on this point he erred in the direction of excessive modesty. "So modest was he that his face would color with blushes when his troops cheered him," says one who knew him well.[20] To be sure, his enthusiastic biographer observes, with fine discrimination, that when a modest man does break out, he does so thoroughly. A curious instance of this is a speech Thomas was forced to make after the war, in which, announcing that he was a modest man, he went on to explain his merits in refusing to take command when offered him to the detriment of his superior.[21] A less modest man, with his wits more about him, would perhaps have left the remark to some one else. But a much more important illustration of the truth and nobility of nature underlying the modesty appears in another speech in which the general explained the battle of Nashville and his chief concern seemed to be to point out his great mistake in not making use of the cavalry to destroy Hood completely. You will go some way before you find another commander busy enlarging on the things he ought to have done and did not do.[22]

Again, Thomas's reserve saved him from the

fault, too general on both sides during the war, of not speaking harshly in criticism of his superiors or his subordinates, of allowing that jealousy of others' success, which is perhaps inseparable from human weakness, to become manifest in outward speech and action. It is rare indeed that he expresses himself with such frankness as about Schurz: "I do not think he is worth much from what I have seen of him and should not regret to have him go," [23] or in regard to an expedition of Stoneman: "The Stoneman raid turns out to be a humbug. . . . It seems that when twenty-five of the enemy are seen anywhere, they are considered in force." [24] On the other hand, how admirable was the loyalty, based, of course, on sound judgment, which made him unwilling to be put in place of Buell on the eve of battle and in the highest degree reluctant to succeed Rosecrans. When the latter change was first proposed, Dana wrote that Thomas refused absolutely, — "he could not consent to become the successor of General Rosecrans, because he would not do anything to give countenance to the suspicion that he had intrigued against his commander. Besides, he has as perfect confidence in the capacity and fidelity of Rosecrans as he had in those of General Buell." [25] Even when it would have been easy and natural to say something unpleasant, Thomas refrains, as in commenting on the victory of Chattanooga, won, it is usually supposed, quite contrary to Grant's plans. "It will be

perceived from the above report that the original plan of operations was somewhat modified to meet and take the best advantage of emergencies, which necessitated material modifications of that plan. It is believed, however, that the original plan, had it been carried out, could not possibly have led to more successful results." [26]

If, as is sometimes asserted, Thomas was jealous of Grant, the moderation of the above passage is all the more noticeable. That there was a certain amount of the very human jealousy I have suggested above is possible. How difficult it is to discriminate motives in such a case is shown by comparing General J. H. Wilson's description of Grant's first arrival at Chattanooga, wet, weary, and wounded, and Thomas's reception of him, with Horace Porter's account of the same scene. According to General Wilson, Thomas was completely out of sorts and treated Grant with inexcusable rudeness, arising, Wilson thinks, from smouldering jealousy.[27] Porter, on the other hand, feels that the undeniable discourtesy on Thomas's part sprang rather from preoccupation with other cares,[28] and he analyzes excellently the probable facts as to the relations between the two great leaders. "There is very little doubt that if any other two general officers in the service had been placed in the same trying circumstances there would have been an open rupture." [29]

III

So far, then, as to the negative advantages of Thomas's reserve and self-control. But the positive advantages were much greater. To begin with, he was by nature businesslike, a man of system. The story that his chief complaint of the enemy at Chickamauga, when everything was collapsing about him, was that "the damned scoundrels are fighting without any system," [30] may be apocryphal, though I am inclined to believe it. But all the evidence shows that he loved to have things work by rule and arranged even little matters with patient care. He was always neat about his dress and person. He liked a completeness even approaching display about his camp service and equipage, had formal negro attendants and silver tableware. All Sherman's efforts to reduce this equipment for the sake of example during the Atlanta campaign were quite unavailing, yet it does not seem to have resulted from any instinct of aristocratic superiority, simply from an established habit. In the same way Thomas insisted upon an elaborate administrative apparatus, and the story goes that Sherman, after unduly stripping himself, was very glad to make use of his subordinate's facilities.

It was the same with discipline. Thomas was always approachable, always kindly, but he wanted no time spent without a purpose, and even

in accomplishing a purpose wanted methods to be brief and direct. This thoroughly businesslike element of his character is shown by nothing better than by the change which is said to have taken place in the army when Thomas succeeded Rosecrans. Rosecrans was brilliant but erratic, full of clever schemes, but without settled grasp on either men or movements. Under his control, or lack of it, administration had become dangerously haphazard. With Thomas's appointment everything was altered. As Dana wrote, in his vivid fashion, "order prevails instead of universal chaos." [31]

It was Thomas's habit, before starting on any considerable movement, to see that all pending matters of business were attended to, all papers properly arranged, his own signature affixed to every document that required it.[32] Even matters of comparatively slight importance were not overlooked. Thus, on the morning of December 15, 1864, when he was riding through Nashville to begin the battle which he knew was the great and long-delayed crisis of his life, he stopped his whole staff in the street to give direction that fourteen bushels of coal should be sent to Mr. Harris, his neighbor; "I was out of coal and borrowed this number of bushels from him the other day." [33] Has not such an anecdote the real ring of Plutarch, is it not as fine as Socrates's last payment of the cock to Æsculapius?

This thoroughness of method, of course, shows

in all Thomas's military activity. "The fate of a battle may depend on a buckle," he once said to an officer whose harness broke.[34] He wanted to know where he was going, whom he was going with, what material he had with him and against him. He provided for all possible contingencies of accident. "There is always a remedy for any failure of a part of Thomas's plans, or for the delinquencies of subordinates." [35] He left nothing to others that he could do himself. "On a march or a campaign, he saw every part of his army every day. . . . If, when he was at the rear, the sounds indicated contact with the enemy, he passed on to the very front, where he often dismounted and walked to the outer skirmish line, to reconnoitre." [36] The extreme of this methodical care is shown in his curious remark to Dana, "I should have long since liked to have had an independent command, but what I should have desired would have been the command of an army that I could myself have organized, disciplined, distributed, and combined." [37] It is a striking piece of irony that when Sherman left him in chief command to confront Hood, he should have had the exact opposite of this, an unorganized, incoherent, scattered, chaotic army, which he had to make before he used it. He did make it, shape it, put it together, before he would stir one step. Then he struck the most finished, telling, perfect blow that was struck on either side during the war.

And the natural result of this splendid thoroughness was a universal reliability. Everybody, from the commander-in-chief to the camp followers, trusted Thomas. When he telegraphed to Grant from Chattanooga, "We will hold the town till we starve," everybody knew there was no bluster about it, everybody knew the town would be held. In this connection, perhaps, the grandeur and force of his character made themselves more felt at Chickamauga than even at Nashville. When everything is marching steadily to victory according to a preconceived plan, you may know the power that is behind, but you do not feel it directly and vividly. But when things go wrong, when strong men are breaking blindly, when disaster seems sweeping on beyond check or stay, then to lean back against one magnificent will, of itself sufficient to change fate, does indeed give you a sense of what human personality can be.

It is in moments like these that a physique such as Thomas's, with all it expresses of the soul, is most imposing. He was tall, broad, solidly built, with firm, square shoulders, and a full-bearded face as firm and square as the shoulders were. Some say the expression was stern, some say kind and gentle. Probably it could be either, according to circumstances, and I delight in Garfield's comment on the eyes, "cold gray to his enemies, but warm deep blue to his friends." [88] Equally enthusiastic is Howard's denial of the charge of coldness

and severity: "To me General Thomas's features never seemed 'cold.' His smile of welcome was pleasant and most cordial. His words and acts of confidence drew toward him my whole heart, particularly when I went into battle under him." [39] And this is the impression that I get most of Thomas as a battle-leader, one of immense comfort. Others may have been more showy, even more inspiring. To fight under Thomas was like having a wall at your back or a great battery to cover you.

IV

Naturally, characteristics so strongly marked as the reserve and poise and self-control we have been analyzing in Thomas carry some defects with them. Strongly marked characteristics always do. His love of system and the regular way of doing things did sometimes degenerate into a defect. This shows in little foibles of no moment except for what they indicate. Thus, Thomas was walking one day with Sherman and they came across a soldier parching corn from the fields. Thomas commended him, but advised him not to waste any. As they passed on, Sherman heard the fellow mutter, "There he goes, there goes the old man, economizing as usual." And Sherman's characteristic comment is, "'Economizing' with corn, which cost only the labor of gathering and roasting." [40] Again, it is said that Thomas hated new

clothes, and when his promotions began to come faster than he could wear out his uniforms, he was always one uniform behind.[41] Of similar trivlality, yet significance, is the story that when he was put into a good bed in a Louisville hotel, he could not sleep, but sent for his camp cot in the middle of the night.[42]

More important in this line is his criticism of the Sanitary and Christian Commissions. With all their usefulness, they were something of a trial from the point of view of system, and Thomas complains, "They have caused much trouble and could be easily dispensed with for the good of the service, as their duties are legitimately those of, and should be performed by, the medical department." [43]

Most illuminating of all for Thomas's mental constitution is his attitude toward rank, promotion, and official dignity. Advancement was slow in coming to him at first, partly, perhaps, because of his Southern antecedents, partly also because of his quiet discharge of duty, without talk or political effort. When others were placed over him, he made no protest of ambition or desire and was disposed to bear slights which merely touched his personal worth with dignified indifference. But the minute he felt that the regular order of procedure was interfered with, he was ready to object. Thus, when he is put under Mitchell, in 1861, he writes, "Justice to myself requires that I ask to be

relieved from duty with these troops, since the Secretary has thought it necessary to supersede me in the command, without, as I conceive, any just cause for so doing." [44]

At a later date he is subordinated to Rosecrans and protests in the same spirit: "Although I do not claim for myself any superior ability, yet feeling conscious that no just cause exists for overslaughing me by placing me under my junior, I feel deeply mortified and aggrieved at the action in this matter." [45] This, I think, shows clearly the instinct of system tending to harden into a red-tape habit. We can all imagine how differently Sherman would have written under similar circumstances, perhaps as follows: I don't care a damn whether the man is my senior or my junior. The one question is, can he do the work better than I? To speak frankly, I don't think he can.

Another curious case is Thomas's insistence on being transferred to the Pacific Department after the war. His biographer admits that he did not wish to go there, but was merely unwilling to see his rank degraded by having Schofield given the higher appointment.[46]

And Thomas's methodical temper is sometimes asserted to have given rise to a defect even more serious, that of excessive deliberateness, not to say slowness in action. This much-debated point is too purely military for a civilian to settle, but some discussion of it is necessary.

Perhaps the most severe criticism of Thomas comes from his own subordinate, Schofield, in connection with the Nashville campaign. Summed up very briefly and stripped of politeness, Schofield charges that Thomas should have concentrated and fought Hood earlier, that Schofield himself really won Nashville at Franklin, that when Nashville was fought it was Schofield's advice that made the victory complete, that on the second day of the battle Thomas's leadership was quite inadequate, and that Thomas's reports cannot have been written by himself, because he would have been incapable of omitting to give credit for his subordinate's achievements, a civil way of insinuating that Thomas suppressed the truth. All this would be indeed overwhelming, if exact.

Milder critics insist that Thomas was slow at Nashville, notably Grant, both at the time and afterwards, repeating to Young the old story of the general's nickname of "Slow-Trot Thomas," acquired at West Point.[47] But Grant was apt to couple Thomas's name with some innuendo, as was Sherman, who, though often praising his subordinate's steadiness, complains of the difficulty of keeping him moving. "A fresh furrow in a plowed field will stop the whole column, and all begin to intrench."[48]

Cox, who knew Thomas well and admired him much and who has none of Schofield's obvious personal irritation, is inclined to agree with the

latter that the general might have met and defeated Hood more promptly. And Colonel T. L. Livermore, after his minute and careful analysis of Thomas's whole career, inclines to the belief that in almost every one of his battles he might have accomplished more than he did, this being particularly the case in regard to Chickamauga. Colonel Livermore, however, admits that Thomas's greatness deserves all admiration and that no one would question it, if it were not for the fact that his biographers try to exalt him by depreciating everybody else. This they certainly do, with more ardor than discernment.

On the point of generalship I think we may conclude that, while perhaps Thomas had not the headlong aggressiveness of Sherman and Sheridan, of Jackson and Stuart, he had gifts so great, so successful, and so fruitful, gifts not only of steadiness and far reaching preparation, but also of broad conception and strategic intelligence, that to find fault with him is an ungracious and a thankless task.

V

So far we have considered Thomas as a man of reserved power, of poise and self-control, and there is a general impression that he was cold and stolid, of a statuesque temperament, little subject to human passion and infirmity. Careful study shows that this is less true than might be supposed. The

human passions were there, however watchfully governed.

Take ambition. Few men seem to have been freer from its subtle influence. Thomas declined advancement when he thought it unjust to others, declined to be put in Buell's place, declined to be put in Rosecrans's, declined to let Johnson set him up as lieutenant-general to interfere with Grant. He declined a nomination for the Presidency because he felt himself not fitted for it. Nor did the more solid fruits of ambition tempt him. After the war he was offered a handsome house, but declined it. A large sum of money was raised for him. He declined it, though poor, and desired it to be expended for the relief of disabled soliders.

Yet in one of the few letters that have come to us from his early days, there is a real human cry: "This will be the only opportunity I shall have of distinguishing myself, and not to be able to avail myself of it is too bad." [49] And there is something equally human about a disclaimer of ambition in later days: "I have exhibited at least sufficient energy to show that if I had been entrusted with the command of the expedition at that time, . . . I might have conducted it successfully. . . . I went to my duty without a murmur, as I am neither ambitious nor have any political aspirations." [50] Now don't you think perhaps he was a little ambitious, after all?

Again, take temper. Thomas had plenty of it

under his outward calm. His vexatious biographers declare that, although no church member, he was devoutly religious and used and allowed no profanity. I have no question as to the religion, but I have quoted some profanity above which sounds genuine — and good — to me, and there is more elsewhere. Also, there is evidence of magnificent temper. It is said that at West Point the young cadet threatened to throw a would-be hazer out of the window,[51] but this may have been not temper, but policy. Later instances are indisputable. When an officer of his staff misappropriated a horse, the general overwhelmed him with a torrent of reproach, drew his sword, ripped off the officer's shoulder-straps, and forced him to dismount and lead the horse a long distance to its owner.[52] On another occasion a teamster was beating his mules over the head when the commander fell upon him with such a tumult of invective that the fellow fled to the woods and disappeared.[53]

But the most interesting evidence as to Thomas's temper is his own self-confession in the admirable letter he wrote declining a nomination for the Presidency after the war. He gives a list of his disqualifications and places prominently among them, "I have not the necessary control over my temper," adding this really delightful piece of self-analysis: "My habits of life, established by a military training of over twenty-five years, are

such as to make it repugnant to my self-respect to have to induce people to do their duty by persuasive measures. If there is anything that enrages me more than another, it is to see an obstinate and self-willed man opposing what is right, morally and legally, simply because under the law he cannot be compelled to do what is right." [54] Perhaps he would not have made a good President of the United States, since that individual must be subjected to visions of the above nature at rather frequent intervals.

Thomas was human in other aspects, also. He took a real human joy in fighting and victory. When the arrival of A. J. Smith assured success at Nashville, Thomas took Smith in his arms and hugged him.[55] How pretty is the story Shanks tells of the general's eagerness in reporting Chickamauga to Rosecrans. "Whenever I touched their flanks, they broke, general, they broke." Then, catching Shanks's eye fixed upon him, "as if ashamed of his momentary enthusiasm, the blood mounted to his cheeks and he blushed like a woman." [56] Sherman says that when Atlanta was taken, "the news seemed to Thomas almost too good to be true. He snapped his fingers, whistled, and almost danced." [57] The image of Thomas dancing is of a peculiar gayety. Yet I have seen just such men do just such things.

As to the sense of humor, some maintain that Thomas had it not. Everybody has it, if you can

find it. According to Horace Porter, the general took great delight in the jokes of a vaudeville entertainment with which the officers whiled away camp tediousness. One story told by Keyes, though homely, is so accordant to Thomas's methodical and mathematical temperament that I cannot omit it. Keyes was looking for a certain officer who was a great chewer and spitter, and as he sat at his desk, spat in winter into the fireplace, in summer out of the window. "Now," said Thomas, "you may come in at the window and follow up the line of tobacco juice on the floor, or you may descend the chimney and trace from that, and at the intersection of the two lines you will discover B——." [58] Something in the anecdote seems to show something in the man.

If there is doubt about Thomas's humor, there is none whatever about his sensibility. It was, indeed, limited in character. He was a soldier and little else, and I find no trace in him of responsiveness to literature or art or even the beauty of nature. Though an industrious reader, his reading was mainly confined to his own profession and related subjects, for instance, military and constitutional law, in which he was well versed. But as a man and a soldier, his feelings were of the keenest. The most striking testimony to this is the contemporary observation of Quartermaster Donaldson, writing to his superior Meigs, of a conversation held with the general in January, 1865: "He

feels very sore at the rumored intentions to relieve him, and the major-generalcy does not cicatrize the wound. You know Thomas is morbidly sensitive, and it cuts him to the heart to think that it was contemplated to remove him. He does not blame the Secretary, for he said Mr. Stanton was a fair and just man." [59] The last sentence is as nobly characteristic as the preceding one. But the sensitiveness was there and shows repeatedly under the stoical calm, as in the remark just before Nashville, "Wilson, they treat me at Washington and at Grant's headquarters as though I were a boy," [60] and in the retort to Stanton, when they met after the war was over and the Secretary declared that he had always trusted the general: "Mr. Stanton, I am sorry to hear you make this statement. I have not been treated as if you had confidence in me." [61] Also, the general showed a very human susceptibility in his resentment at being criticized by Schofield.[62]

And as Thomas was sensitive, so he was kindly and tender, though his grave manner sometimes bred the contrary opinion. Sherman even declares that he was too kind for discipline and that at his headquarters everybody was allowed to do as he pleased.[63] This is Sherman's exaggeration, but Thomas was kind to officers and men, kind, considerate, approachable. The consideration showed in things slight, but eminently significant. For instance, it is said that on the march, if the

general was riding hastily to the front, he would take his staff through swamps and thickets, and leave the highway to the trudging soldiers." So, after the war, he was thoughtful both of his old followers and of the enemy. And the proof of this is that not only his followers adored "Old Pap," but that, in spite of excellent grounds of animosity, Southerners generally speak of him with more admiration and respect than of almost any other Northern commander.

Nor, in dwelling on Thomas's kindness, should we omit one most important feature of it, his tender regard for animals. Maltreatment of them roused him to fierce indignation, and horses, mules, dogs, cats, and even fowls, looked upon him as their peculiar friend and protector.

I wish I could say something about the general's more intimate personal relations. But he would have nothing published bearing upon them and it is right that his reticence should be respected, though I feel sure that the more closely we studied him, the more we should love him. Oddly enough, purely personal material does not often get into the "Official Records," yet with Thomas, most secretive of men, we have one of the few documents that seem to speak directly from one heart to another. Among the formal correspondence bearing upon the battle of Nashville we find the following brief dispatch, hitherto overlooked by the general's biographers: "Mrs. F. L.

Thomas, New York Hotel, New York: We have whipped the enemy, taken many prisoners and considerable artillery." [65] These are bare and simple words. But when I think who wrote them, who read them, and all they meant, they bring tears to my eyes at any rate.

So now we understand that this high-souled gentleman, for all his dignity and all his serenity, was neither cold nor stolid, and we are better prepared to understand the startling significance of his brief remark to one who was very close to him, "Colonel, I have taken a great deal of pains to educate myself not to feel." [66]

Truly a royal and heroic figure and one for all Americans to be proud of. Is it not, indeed, an immortal glory for Virginia to have produced the noblest soldier of the Revolution and the noblest that fought for the North in the Civil War, as well as the noblest that fought for the South? Some day I hope to see her erect a worthy monument to one of the greatest of her sons. But, as she grows every year richer, more prosperous, more fortunate, more loyal in the Union for which he helped to save her, she herself, whether she wills it or not, will more and more become his proudest monument.

V

WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Lancaster, Ohio, February 8, 1820.
Graduated at West Point, 1840.
In California, 1847–50.
Married Ellen Boyle Ewing, May 1, 1850.
Numerous occupations till 1859.
President Louisiana Military Academy, 1859–61.
Colonel at Bull Run, 1861.
Prominent at Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga.
Commanded in Georgia and the Carolinas, 1864, 1865.
Received Johnston's surrender, April 26, 1865.
Appointed general of all armies March 5, 1869.
Wrote "Memoirs," 1875.
Revised "Memoirs," 1885.
Died, February 14, 1891.

V

WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN

I

IT is curious to turn from the study of Thomas to the study of Sherman. Thomas instinctively hides himself. To get at his soul you have to watch keenly, to pick up fine threads of self-revelation in a waste of conventional formality and follow their light tissue with the closest care. Sherman turns himself inside out even in an official document. He wore his coat unbuttoned and his heart also, exposed its inmost linings to all the winds of heaven — and all the eyes of curious reporters, whom he detested for seeing and recording what was there and what was not. This perpetual exposure is almost as baffling as Thomas's concealment, though in another fashion. We like a soul to be open, and clean, and windblown. But I am not sure that we like to see it always thrashing on the clothesline.

"Typically American" is a loose term and gets looser every day. But Ropes and many others have applied it to Sherman, and with singular justice. Few figures of the war have more marked American characteristics than he. Lincoln is often instanced. But Lincoln had strange depths, even

yet unexplored, which do not seem American at all. Grant was too quiet.

Sherman was never quiet, physically or mentally. Like so many Americans who do things, he had not robust health. In 1846, on his way to California, he gave up smoking. "The reason was, it hurt my breast. . . . The habit shall never be resumed." [1] It was resumed, and given up again, and inveterate, as the hurt was. But no hurt made flag that indefatigable, unfaltering, resistless energy. "Blessed with a vitality that only yields to absolute death," he says of himself.[2] Assuredly he was so blessed. One who did not love him observed, "With a clear idea of what he wanted and an unyielding determination to have it, he made himself and everybody around him uncomfortable, till his demands were gratified." [3]

His character was written all over him. The tall, spare, wiry figure, the fine-featured, wrinkle-netted face, expressed the man. He had auburn hair, and one lock of it behind would stick straight out, when he was eager or excited. I never think of Sherman without seeing that lock.

His manner was even more expressive than his features. He was always in movement when he talked, striding up and down, if possible, if not, moving head or hands or feet. When Horace Porter first came to him from Grant, he found Sherman in his slippers, reading a newspaper, and all through the conversation the newspaper was

frantically brandished and one foot was in and out of the slipper perpetually.[4] The general's talk was always hurried, vigorous, incisive, punctuated with strange, sharp, and uncouth gestures. "In giving his instructions and orders," says one acute observer, "he will take a person by the shoulder and push him off as he talks, follow him to the door, all the time talking and urging him away. His quick, restless manner almost invariably results in the confusion of the person whom he is thus instructing, but Sherman himself never gets confused. At the same time, he never gets composed." [5]

As he was American in look and manner, so he was eminently American in the movement of his life. He himself writes, "It does seem that nature for some wise purpose . . . does ordain that man shall migrate, clear out from the place of his birth." [6] He migrated, at any rate, like a bird, or the thought of a poet. Born in Ohio, in 1820, he passed apparently a tranquil boyhood. But with youth his adventures began. From West Point he went to Florida, from Florida to South Carolina. Then came California, then New York, then New Orleans, California again, New York again, St. Louis, and again New Orleans. Remember, that in those days the journey from New York to San Francisco was like a journey round the world at present.

Nor was all this divagation merely military. Sherman was soldier only in part. At other times

he was banker, farmer, lawyer, president of a railroad, president of a college. Only heroic self-restraint saved him from being an artist. "I have great love for painting and find that sometimes I am so fascinated that it amounts to pain to lay down the brush, placing me in doubt whether I had better stop now before it swallows all attention, to the neglect of my duties, and discard it altogether, or keep on. What would you advise?" [7] Here is the first and last time he ever mentions painting.

After this twenty years' Odyssey, just at the beginning of the war he gets a spell at home with Penelope and the budding Telemachus, and observes — with a sigh: "I must try and allay that feeling of change and venture that has made me a wanderer. If possible I will settle down — fast and positive." [8]

The war comes. He rides and rages through Bull Run, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, like a comet through Georgia and the Carolinas, to the highest war can give him and to peace. But he never settles down — never.

II

Some men whose feet are thus tirelessly wandering tread a very narrow region in their minds, just as others' minds rove widely, while their feet are still. With Sherman there was incessant movement of both mind and body. He had the busiest

imagination in all these various careers, saw all possibilities of chance and accident and endeavored to provide for them, turned over a dozen courses of action before he hit the one that would answer his purpose best. At the beginning of the war others tried to accomplish full results with half measures, could not stretch prevision to the scope of effort necessary to avert the immense train of damage and disaster. Sherman saw and foresaw everything, and because he predicted the vastness of the struggle and demanded means adequate to meet it, those in authority and the press men, whose imagination was always immensely busy at short range, decried and almost displaced him as a sheer, unbalanced lunatic.

All through the war this acute imagination of military possibility and necessity marked him more than almost any one. Sometimes, doubtless, it led him to curious extremes, as in his advice to Sheridan, in November, 1864: "I am satisfied, and have been all the time, that the problem of this war consists in the awful fact that the present class of men who rule the South must be killed outright rather than in the conquest of territory; . . . therefore I shall expect you on any and all occasions to make bloody results."[9]

An imagination so vivid and energetic has its dangers. One is the misrepresentation of fact, especially in the past. Perhaps Sherman was too careless in this matter. His attitude is partly in-

dicated in his remark to a newspaper man, who had written a sketch of him: "You make more than a dozen mistakes of facts, which I need not correct as I don't desire my biography till I am dead." [10] This is all very well, but if a man does not correct his biography while living, his chance of doing so later is limited. Sherman's "Memoirs" have been bitterly attacked on this score of inaccuracy. "His story is . . . often widely at variance with the 'Official Records,' and with every one's recollection, except his own," says Colonel Stone; [11] and Professor Royce's comment on the Californian portion is, "In fact, not only antecedent probability, but sound testimony, is against General Sherman's memory, a memory which, for the rest, was hardly meant by the Creator for purely historical purposes, genial and amusing though its productions may be." [12]

The general's remark, in the preface to the revised edition of the "Memoirs" — revised chiefly by the printing of protests in an appendix — is most happily characteristic. I am, he says in substance, writing my own memoirs, not those of other people.

As to this question of accuracy, however, it is essential not to overlook the testimony of Grant, who declared that Sherman was a very accurate man, that he always kept a diary, and that the "Memoirs" were founded on that diary in all matters of fact.[13]

Another serious danger of an active imagination is that it may go far outside the province that belongs to it. This was certainly the tendency of Sherman's. Not content with giving sleepless hours to devising all sorts of schemes for the military destruction of the enemy, he ranged far into the political field, conceived and ceaselessly suggested measures financial and administrative, which would aid in bringing about the military result. Many other generals had this habit, just as many politicians contrived to win victories in a back corner of an office; but few whirled out of their proper orbit with such breakneck velocity as Sherman. He was always delivering huge screeds of political comment, oral or written, to the North, to the South, to soldiers, to civilians, to officials, to laymen. Hear one of his wildest outbursts on the general conduct of the war: "To secure the safety of the navigation of the Mississippi River I would slay millions. On that point I am not only insane, but mad. . . . For every bullet shot at a steamboat, I would shoot a thousand 30-pounder Parrotts into even helpless towns on Red, Ouachita, Yazoo, or wherever a boat can float or soldier march."[14] Do you wonder that some thought the general a little unreliable?

Hear him again on the deserts of the South: "To the petulant and persistent secessionists, why, death is mercy, and the quicker he or she is disposed of the better. Satan and the rebellious saints

of heaven were allowed a continuous existence in hell merely to swell their just punishment. To such as would rebel against a government so mild and just as ours was in peace, a punishment equal would not be unjust." [15]

It is this abstract and imaginative fury, constantly suggesting the doctrinaire idealists of the French Revolution, which makes Sherman appear decidedly at a disadvantage in his correspondence with Hood as to the treatment of Atlanta and again in the correspondence with Hardee before Savannah.

As to details of policy there is the same fertility of suggestion, the same imperious decisiveness. Finance? Are you short of currency? Use cotton. Tie it up in neat weighed bales, and it will be at least better than your Confederate shinplasters.[16] The draft? The draft? Certainly enforce the draft. "Unless you enact a law denying to all citizens, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five who do not enlist and serve three years faithfully, all right of suffrage, or to hold office after the war is over, you will have trouble." [17] Niggers? Now, what can you do with niggers? They are not fit for soldiers, they are not fit for citizens, they are just fit for labor that white men cannot do. "I would not if I could abolish or modify slavery," he wrote in December, 1859.[18]

The influence of all this varied thinking was doubled by a really dæmonic power of expression.

Sherman's dispatches become letters, his letters pamphlets. Some accuse him of loquacity. This is absurd. His style is vigorous, pointed, energetic as his person. His abundance of words, great as it is, is lame and impotent to the hurry of his thought. This is the real significance of his ludicrous remark, "I am not much of a talker," [19] and again, "Excuse so long a letter, which is very unusual from me." [20] Not much of a talker! Oh, ye gods! The point really is that he talked vastly much, but he could have talked vastly more. On the whole, I thank Heaven he did not.

Those at whom he launched these verbal whirlwinds did not always appreciate them, or profit. Men thought he talked too freely; "more than was wise and proper," [21] was the opinion of the judicious Villard. At the beginning of the war Halleck gave his subordinate a kind and helpful caution, warning him that his use of his tongue was, to say the least, indiscreet. [22] What is most charming is Sherman's way of receiving such good counsel. He knows the danger. He will do all he can to avoid it. "We as soldiers best fulfill our parts by minding our own business, and I will try to do that." [23] "I will try and hold my tongue and pen and give my undivided thoughts and attention to the military duties devolving on me." [24]

He might as well have tried to dam his beloved Mississippi. Listen to the comment of one excellent observer on the general's conversational pro-

clivities: "He *must* talk, quick, sharp, and yet not harshly, all the time making his odd gestures, which, no less than the intonation of his voice, serve to emphasize his language. He cannot bear a clog upon his thoughts nor an interruption to his language. He admits of no opposition. He overrides everything. He never hesitates at interrupting any one, but cannot bear to be interrupted himself."[25]

The most striking instance of Sherman's talking and writing tendency to digress into politics was his agreement with Johnston upon terms of peace at the time of the latter's surrender. In his zeal to carry out his ideas of the public good, the Union commander certainly exceeded the ordinary limits of military negotiation. It is equally true that Stanton and Halleck were unnecessarily rough and discourteous in disapproving his arrangements. Nevertheless, their ill-judged harshness did not justify Sherman's violent outburst to his own subordinate, Logan: "If such be the welcome the East gives to the West, we can but let them make war and fight it out themselves."[26]

III

What I have written so far must not be held to imply that Sherman was a dreamer, a mere visionary, who lived in the clouds. His whole career and his immense accomplishment would make such a suggestion absurd. Rich and eager as his imagi-

nation was, it was always subject to the closest bonds of logic and reasoning. It was this that made his conclusions not only abundant, but positive. "My opinions are usually very positive," he writes, "and there is no reason why you should not know them." [27] To him, at any rate, they appeared to be based upon arguments which he had examined and found irrefragable.

It is curious that some who knew him well have denied that he was a reasoner. His subordinate in Louisiana, Professor Boyd, declared that he leaped to results by intuition, that he could not give reasons, and that his letters contained not reasons, but conclusions.[28] This seems to me a misapprehension. It was not that he could not give reasons, but that he would not. He was a soldier, a man of action. He could not stop to make plain his mental processes to a bungler like you or me. Paper would not suffice to hold his conclusions. How then should he bother with explaining the long and devious paths by which he came to them? His own view of his logical activity is delightful. "I am too fast, but there are principles of government as sure to result from war as in law, religion, or any moral science. Some prefer to jump to the conclusion by reason. Others prefer to follow developments by the slower and surer road of experience." [29] Even more delightful is his adjustment of the whole matter to the somewhat academic level of Professor Boyd: "Never

give reasons for what you think or do until you must. Maybe, after a while, a better reason will pop into your head." [30]

This blending of iron logic with vivid imagination is most characteristic of Sherman always. His imagination made him wonderfully, charmingly tolerant, up to a certain point, of the views of others, and even, where he had not concluded positively, distrustful of his own. He begs to be checked, if inclined to exceed proper authority.[31] With winning self-criticism he assures Grant that "Rosecrans and Burnside and Sherman . . . would be ashamed of petty quarrels if you were behind and near them." [32] And what an admirable piece of analysis is his comparison of himself with Grant and McClernand. McClernand, he says, sees well what is near, but very little beyond. "My style is the reverse. I am somewhat blind to what occurs near me, but have a clear perception of things and events remote. Grant possesses the happy medium and it is for this reason I admire him." [33]

But if Sherman was broad-minded and gently tolerant up to a certain point, beyond that he ceased to be so, and then his energetic logic made him refuse all compromise. He was, if I may use the phrase, fiercely reasonable. Just because he saw so far and saw so clearly, it seemed to him that there could be nothing worth considering beyond the limits of his vision. To serve under him, when you shared his views, or trusted him wholly,

must have been a joy; but it was surely purgatory, when you disliked him and he disliked you. If he was once convinced that you were in the wrong, nothing too savage could be done to set you intellectually right for your own good. In other words, as an officer of the Inquisition, he would have been unsurpassed in ingenuity and in severity.

Probably the most amusing as well as the most instructive of his intolerances was his animosity toward newspaper men. No working general on either side enjoyed them or permitted them more freedom than policy absolutely required. But Sherman detested them. It has been shrewdly pointed out that he was too much like them to love them and that as a war correspondent he could probably have earned a much larger salary than as a general. It has been suggested, also, that his professed hatred of publicity arose from a desire to supply his own, which he was royally able to do.

Be this as it may, the general is never more entertaining than when speaking his mind about the press. Sometimes he lashes it with sarcasm, "We have picked up the barges, and will save some provisions, but none of the reporters 'floated.' They were so deeply laden with weighty matter that they must have sunk. In the language of our Dutch captain, 'What a pity for religion is this war!' but in our affliction we can console ourselves with the pious reflection that there are plenty more left of the same sort." [84] Sometimes he lectures

it paternally and endeavors to put these children of the Evil One into the right way. "Now I am again in authority over you, and you must heed my advice. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press, precious relics of former history, must not be construed too largely. You must print nothing that prejudices government or excites envy, hatred, and malice in a community. Persons in office or out of office must not be flattered or abused." [85] Is not every word of that delicious? And for misbehavior he would in all cases exact the severest penalty. "Even in peaceful times I would make every publisher liable in money for the truth of everything he prints." [86] Oh, stern idealist, —

> "Hereafter in a better world than this
> I shall desire more love and knowledge of you."

As newspapers represented free speech, and as free speech is inseparably bound up with democracy, Sherman's mistrust of popular government grew all through the war. Personally he was the most democratic of men. Also, he was convinced that one political organization must prevail over the whole United States. But as to the final character of that organization he was somewhat doubtful. "This country must be united by the silken bonds of a generous and kindly Union if possible, or by the harsh steel bands of a despot otherwise. Of course, we all prefer the former." [87]

Of course he did prefer it. Still, the editors sometimes tried his patience. Once, when it was overtried, he wrote, "The rapid popular change almost makes me monarchist, and raises the question whether the self-interest of one man is not a safer criterion than the wild opinions of ignorant men." [88]

The nice combination of restless fancy with vigorous logic which we have been analyzing probably reached its climax in Sherman's career with the celebrated and dramatic march from Atlanta to the seaboard. Hardly any other general, North or South, would have conceived anything so unusual. Sober critics, at the time and since, have condemned it from the purely military point of view. If justifiable, its justification must be found in those larger political arguments which delighted its contriver. It was forged almost as a dream in that eager and fertile workshop from which dreams came so thickly. But the point is that, conceived as a dream, it was worked out with exactly reasoned care, so that in the end success attended almost every step of it. It was no dream to lead a hundred thousand men two hundred miles through a hostile country and bring them out in perfect fighting trim and with a confidence in their commander which had grown at every step they took.

So we see that, for all his visions and all his theories, Sherman was an intensely practical man.

Dreams to him were simply rich possibilities of fact. Except as they could be realized, he took no interest in them. And he devoted himself to realizing them with all the energy of his nature. "I must have facts, knocks, and must go on." [39]

Everybody recognizes that he studied his troops closely, kept careful count of just what men he had and what sort of men, and the same for the enemy. It is remarkable that when so many generals allowed their imaginations to run away with them in overestimating the number opposed, Sherman more often calculated under than over.

Again, he was notable as a provider. He figured his needs carefully and made everything yield to them. Tracks must be kept clear, trains must be kept running, noncombatants must be disregarded, even though high authority appealed for them. No difficulties were recognized and no excuses would serve. To a hesitating quartermaster the curt answer was: "If you don't have my army supplied, and keep it supplied, we'll eat your mules up, sir, — eat your mules up." [40]

In other matters of organization Sherman had the same instinct for system and disliked what interfered with it. He objected, as Thomas did, to the intrusion of even philanthropy into the sphere of his command. "The Sanitary and Christian Commissions are enough to eradicate all traces of Christianity out of our minds." [41] Yet, while he exacted absolute subordination from

others, he was ready and eager to obey the orders of his superiors, even though he might not approve of them.

There is difference of opinion as to the minuteness with which he planned for possible contingencies. Schofield thinks that in this regard he was neglectful of detail.[42] Possibly. But the activity of his imagination led him to consider and reconsider all the essentials of accident. And it was rare that either circumstances or the enemy confronted him with a situation which he had not already taken into account, in most cases with adequate precaution.

The greatest test of a general's practical ability is as to his skill in handling men. Perhaps others surpassed Sherman in this, but, considering his temperament, his success was wonderful. His greatest lack was patience. When things did not suit him, he could be very disagreeable, as with Hooker. On the other hand, he had three admirable qualities, which go farther than any others in dealing with one's fellows, sympathy, simplicity, sincerity. He could understand a man's difficulties. He could step right down from his dignity and take hold of them. He had no hesitation in telling you what he thought and you knew it was exactly what he did think.

With his equals and superiors this frankness is especially fine. How genuine, how free from offense because of their genuineness, and how helpful, are

his letters of advice and caution to Grant, who was large enough to take them as they were meant and profit by them. Those addressed to Buell are no less creditable, though probably not received in quite the same spirit.

With his own subordinates Sherman's human qualities were even more effective. The soldiers delighted in "the old man's" brusqueness and oddities. "Uncle Billy" was a quaint figure such as simple minds love to mock at and tell tales of. It is alleged that strict discipline was not always observed in Sherman's armies. If so, it is because the commander cared nothing for parade troops. He was too busy with what was essential to bother with what was not. But if discipline means instant readiness to go when and where ordered, Sherman's men were disciplined enough. They had confidence in their chief. Even when he seemed to be leading them out into the darkness, away from all support and all communication, they never hesitated to follow. He said everything would be right, and they knew it would. What is more, they loved him. In spite of his wrinkled face and his harsh speech and his uncouth ways, they loved him, because they knew he was honest and fearless and thought more about them than he did about himself.

IV

Through all this discussion, it will have been perfectly evident what I meant by calling Sherman typically American. Though by profession and habit a soldier, in his union of the theoretical and practical he was essentially the man of business who is to-day everywhere the most prominent and characteristic American figure. Let us see how thoroughly the business quality entered into the various aspects of Sherman's career.

To begin with, he was a vast and tireless worker. "His industry was prodigious," says Grant. "He worked all the time, and with an enthusiasm, a patience, and a good humor that gave him great power with his army." [43] He was no shirk, no man to throw on to others anything that he could do himself. On the contrary, if others failed him, he would do double. "They have not sent us a single regular officer from Washington, and so engrossed are they with Missouri that they don't do us justice. The more necessity for us to strain every nerve." [44]

Again, fighting with him was rather a business than a pleasure. His personal courage was, of course, beyond question. But some have questioned whether, as a consequence of his imaginative and sensitive temperament, he was not rather less clear-headed and capable under the pressure of combat than when planning a battle or a cam-

paign. General Howard asserts that "his intense suggestive faculties seemed often to be impaired by the actual conflict." [45] On the other hand, Cox and Schofield both testify that where others grew excited Sherman grew cool, and that in the presence of immediate danger he dropped theoretical discussion and settled all difficulties with peremptory sternness. "On the battlefield where he commands Sherman's nervous manner is toned down. He grates his teeth, and his lips are closed more firmly, giving an expression of greater determination to his countenance." [46]

In any case, although he calls being at the head of a strong column of troops, in the execution of some task that requires brain, the highest pleasure of war,[47] yet it is evident that to him fighting was chiefly a means to an end, in other words, a matter of business, to be carried on calmly, carefully, and intelligently as such. "Neither of us," he says of Grant and himself, "by nature was a combative man." [48] In the same spirit, though infinitely careful of his troops, he viewed slaughter with indifference when the necessities of business required it. "Tell Morgan," he said, "that we will lose four thousand men before we take Vicksburg, and we may as well lose them here as anywhere else." [49]

The same businesslike tone appears in Sherman's attitude toward ambition and glory. Like every man who does things, he wished posterity

to speak well of him, to speak highly of him, and he would have been the last to deny this wish. But he was singularly free from the petty vanities of show and adulation which disfigure the biography of so many generals. As he rather affected a shabby appearance, so he rather affected an avoidance of newspaper notoriety. "I never see my name in print without a feeling of contamination, and I will undertake to forego half of my salary if the newspapers will ignore my name."[50] Even as regards more substantial recognition, he was somewhat reluctant, not from undue modesty, for no one ever better gauged his own achievements, but because he feared that sudden exaltation meant a sudden fall. Early in his career he expressed his wish to remain in the background, and when promotion came, his first feeling was that he had not yet deserved it. Few men on the road to distinction have expressed themselves more sensibly than he does in his admirable letter of advice to Buell: "To us, with an angry, embittered enemy in front and all around us, it looks childish, foolish — yea, criminal — for sensible men to be away off to the rear, sitting in security, torturing their brains and writing on reams of foolscap to fill a gap which the future historian will dispose of by a very short, and maybe, an unimportant, chapter, or even paragraph. . . . Like in a race, the end is all that is remembered by the great world."[51]

It is in this purely business instinct, the combining of theory with practice for a business purpose, that we must seek the explanation of the most curious problem in Sherman's career, his harsh treatment of the invaded enemy. No man was by nature less cruel than he. No general expresses himself in the earlier part of the war more decidedly against plundering and vandalism. He urges upon his subordinates consideration for non-combatants: "War at best is barbarism, but to involve all — children, women, old and helpless — is more than can be justified." [52] He deplores the lack of discipline which makes possible the excesses of the soldiers. "[I] am free to admit we all deserve to be killed unless we can produce a state of discipline when such disgraceful acts cannot be committed unpunished." [53] He is even almost ready to resign his position, he feels the disgrace so keenly. "The amount of burning, stealing, and plundering done by our army makes me ashamed of it. I would quit the service if I could, because I feel that we are drifting to the worst sort of vandalism." [54]

Then he has an army of his own, marches straight into the South, and leaves a trail behind which makes him not only execrated by his enemies, but typical in modern warfare for destruction and plunder.* And all just as a sheer matter of busi-

* I leave this as it was written in the spring of 1914. Events since then have made the vandalism of Sherman

ness. The war must be ended and the way to end it was not merely to defeat armies in the field, but to bring desolation and misery to the humblest homes of the Confederacy. He may not have said "War is hell," but assuredly he acted it. He may not have burned Columbia, but he did write, officially, "[I] should not hesitate to burn Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington, or either of them if the garrisons were needed."[55] And he summed up the whole bare naked theory in one tremendous passage, as characteristic of the man as of the methods he employed: "Of necessity, in war the commander on the spot is the judge, and may take your house, your fields, your everything, and turn you all out, helpless, to starve. It may be wrong, but that don't alter the case. In war you can't help yourselves, and the only possible remedy is to stop war. . . . Our duty is not to build up; it is rather to destroy both the rebel army and whatever of wealth or property it has founded its boasted strength upon."[56]

As an admirable concrete illustration of this thoroughly businesslike frame of mind, take the following little touch. At the bottom of a page

seem like discipline and order. The injury done by him seldom directly affected anything but property. There was no systematic cruelty in the treatment of noncombatants, and to the eternal glory of American soldiers be it recorded that insult and abuse toward women were practically unknown during the Civil War.

of the "Memoirs" we read the solemn injunction, with regard to soldiers killed in battle, "There should be no real neglect of the dead." Turn the page and we find out why; "because it has a bad effect on the living." [57]

V

In enlarging on this fiercely practical element in Sherman I have not meant to give the impression that he was a mere machine man, without nerves or emotions. Quite the contrary was the case. He was all nerves, at least on the surface; for I have a shrewd suspicion that, as with so many Americans, the dance of the muscles at once expressed and relieved the inward restlessness. To every emotional stimulus he responded with extraordinary vivacity. A fair day almost distracts him from the rush of battle, and in a formal report he writes, "The scene was enchanting; too beautiful to be disturbed by the harsh clamor of war; but the Chattahoochee lay beyond, and I had to reach it." [58] On the other hand, when the news of South Carolina's secession came to him in New Orleans, it moved him to tears.[59]

Also, he was irritable, as every one admits, had sharp outbursts of temper when things went wrong. This appeared in many little matters as well as in the great historic scene when he showed his bitter, if justifiable, wrath against Stanton by refusing to take his hand before the eyes of the

country and of the whole world. As with his other faults, Sherman was quick to recognize this, illustrating Grant's excellent comment on him, "Sherman is impetuous and faulty, but he sees his faults as soon as any man."[60] Speaking once of his companion in arms, McPherson, the general said, "He is as good an officer as I am — is younger, and has a better temper."[61]

Again, as Sherman was irritable, so he was susceptible of depression and discouragement. The term "melancholy," so applicable to Lincoln, has no significance here. Sherman's downheartedness is far better expressed by the very American word for a very American thing, "disgusted." His low spirits had always a perfectly tangible cause and a moment's change in external circumstances could remove them. But while they lasted, they were very low indeed, and his expressive organization made them widely manifest. Read Villard's account of the behavior which led to the popular belief that the general was insane. His fear as to the future of the Union, says Villard, was so great that it clung to him day and night, like an obsession. "He lived in the Galt House, occupying rooms on the ground floor. He paced by the hour up and down the corridor leading to them, smoking and obviously absorbed in oppressive thoughts. He did this to such an extent that it was generally noticed and remarked upon by the guests and employees of the hotel. His strange ways led to

gossip, and it was soon whispered about that he was suffering from mental depression." [62]

For the internal view of these moods take a passage from Sherman's own letters, on a little different occasion: "My feelings prompted me to forbear and the consequence is my family and friends are almost cold to me, and they feel and say that I have failed at the critical moment of my life. It may be I am but a chip on the whirling tide of time destined to be cast on the shore as a worthless weed." [63]

Then would come the rebound, and natural vivacity and gayety would amply justify the remark of one who knew him well, that, "Of a happy nature himself, he strove to make all around him happy." [64] For laughter as a leisurely amusement of life Sherman had too little time. The wrinkles of that expression were crossed and crowded out by wrinkles of care and passionate endeavor. But he had in a high degree the American gift of shrewd, witty words that either tickle or sting. How apt is his description of Beauregard, "bursting with French despair." How merry is his account of a lawsuit he would wish to have conducted: "I would give one hundred dollars to be free to take Levy's case — put St. Ange on the stand and make him describe his drive to Judge Boyce's and back — he first described the journey as enough to kill any horse, but now that his horse is lame he insists it was a sweet ride and not enough to hurt a colt.

There is plenty of fun in the cause." [65] How apt and merry both is his recommendation of some negro troops to McPherson. Mark Twain might have written it: "There are about 100 negroes fit for service enrolled under the command of the venerable George Washington, who, mounted on a sprained horse, with his hat plumed with the ostrich feather, his full belly girt with a stout belt, from which hangs a terrible cleaver, and followed by his trusty orderly on foot, makes an army on your flank, that ought to give you every assurance of safety from that exposed quarter." [66]

The nerves which were so susceptible to comedy were also responsive to the pathos of life. Very little acquaintance with Sherman is needed to learn that his imagination made him quickly aware of the sufferings of others, and his energy hastened to relieve them. This is evident at all stages of his career, whether he was visiting the bedside of a sick cadet in his Southern college, or interfering to protect a poor widow from the misery his abstract theories of destruction had brought upon her. "The poor woman is distracted and cannot rest. She will soon be as prostrate as her dying daughter. Either the army must move or she." [67]

And though neither fantastic nor morbid, Sherman was also sensitive in his conscientiousness. Where he thought he had done injustice, he would not rest till he had made it right. However his eager fancy might lead him into misstatements,

no man was more scrupulous about telling the truth as he knew it. Above all, he was rigidly insistent on financial honesty. In commercial as well as in military pursuits, he would tolerate no transaction which had the slightest taint. Even so trivial a matter as sending home insignificant souvenirs troubled him. "I could collect plenty of trophies but have always refrained and think it best I should. Others do collect trophies and send home, but I prefer not to do it." [68]

Upon what foundation of religion this strict morality was based is a curious study. Considering his freedom of expression in other respects, Sherman is singularly sparing of religious references in his published letters. If he was at all lacking in positive beliefs, such uncertainty was at any rate not of the rather abject type so exquisitely mocked by Voltaire in his story of the Swiss captain who withdrew into a thicket before battle and prayed, "O my God, if there is a God, please save my soul, if I have a soul." It is probable, however, from occasional allusions to the matter, that Sherman cherished some broad religious beliefs rather positively, but that his essential effort was to forward the cause of good in the world and to love his fellow men. In other words, here again his religion was that of millions of honest, earnest, hard-working Americans, that is, a religion made up, in about equal parts, of reverence and indifference, and perhaps well expressed in the

phrase of one of them, "I am doing my work, let God do his."

It seems appropriate here to emphasize the defects, or shall we say the limitations, of this vital, intricate, most fascinating character, though these limitations are hard to seize and still harder to define.

To begin with, you feel a little excess of purpose in his life. Purpose is a splendid thing, a thoroughly American thing, it moves the world like the lever of Archimedes. But purpose for breakfast, luncheon, and dinner does grow wearisome. A day of mere quiet is good for every one. I do not believe Sherman ever had an hour. To live with him must have been like living with a bumblebee.

Then I feel that Sherman had not depth quite in proportion to his splendid breadth and variety. There were elements in life he never touched. The most striking illustration of this is in his letters. I read his official correspondence and I was astonished at the freedom and ease with which the man poured forth his thoughts and feelings on matters that others were inclined to treat merely formally. I said to myself, what a treasure of self-revelation in things of the soul his personal letters will be. Well, when I turned to the personal letters, they added little or nothing to the official. To his brother and his wife he writes exactly as to a subordinate, or an editor. He says all he has to say to everybody and anybody. It will be urged

that only those portions of his private correspondence which bear on public interests have been published. But that is not the point. It is what he does write that counts, not what he does not. His letters to the girl he loves would make excellent weekly correspondence for a newspaper. Take a curious instance. He begins an affectionate letter to his daughter. Before he has written a page, he drifts into political discussion and concludes that he is writing to the mother, not to the daughter at all.

Another odd case of this living for publicity, all on the outside, is Sherman's insertion in his "Memoirs" of the letter referring to the death of his son, Willie. The paper in itself is touching. The father's affection for his son, as for all his family, is evidently strong and true. But the introduction of such a letter in such a way would have been utterly impossible for a nature like that of Thomas.

And since I have mentioned Thomas, let me refer to another matter which will help to make plain the subtle point I am elucidating. To both Thomas and Lee grateful fellow citizens made the offer of a house purchased by public subscription. Both Thomas and Lee refused, requesting that the money might be given to poor and suffering soldiers. A similar offer was suggested to Sherman. Though unwilling to take anything for himself, he was ready to accept it for his family, pro-

vided it was accompanied with bonds sufficient to pay the taxes.[69] There was nothing in the least discreditable about this, nothing even indelicate. Perhaps the nicety of Thomas was overstrained. But the difference of attitude illustrates exactly what I am attempting to indicate.

May we use the painter's phrase, and say that Sherman's character lacked atmosphere, lacked that something of depth and mystery which makes the indescribable, inexhaustible charm of Lincoln? Sherman seems like one of our clear, blue January days, with a fresh north wind. It stimulates you. It inspires you. But crisp, vivid, intoxicating as it is, it seems to me that too prolonged enjoyment of such weather would dry my soul till the vague fragrance of immortality was all gone out of it.

Yet in his defects as in his excellences he was, we may repeat, a typical American. Perhaps I cannot better emphasize the absurdity of that word "typical" than by expressing the wish that there were many more Americans like him.

VI

EDWIN McMASTERS STANTON

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Steubenville, Ohio, December 19, 1814.
Entered Kenyon College, 1831.
Admitted to the bar, 1835.
Married Mary A. Lamson, December 31, 1836.
Wife died, March 13, 1844.
Practiced law in Ohio till 1847.
Removed to Pittsburg in 1847.
Married Ellen Hutchinson, June 25, 1856.
Government counsel in California, 1857–59.
Defended Daniel E. Sickles, 1859.
Entered Buchanan's Cabinet, December 20, 1860.
Became Secretary of War under Lincoln, January 15, 1862.
Relinquished War Department, May 26, 1868.
Appointed to Supreme Court, December 22, 1869.
Died, December 24, 1869.

VI

EDWIN McMASTERS STANTON

I

THE problem with Stanton is to find out how one so thoroughly disliked and apparently objectionable could get the most important administrative position in the country and hold it through the greatest crisis in American history. This, too, although he was a man with no political standing and very little executive experience, a clever practical lawyer, nothing more. Yet he is set to handling hundreds of thousands of men and hundreds of millions of money, and does it. How? Why?

That Stanton was thoroughly disliked had better be made plain in the beginning by two general quotations, of great vigor and significance. The first represents the result of Mr. John T. Morse's wide study of the man and his surroundings: "Stanton's abilities commanded some respect, though his character never excited either respect or liking. . . . In his dealings with men he was capable of much duplicity, yet in matters of business he was rigidly honest. . . . He was prompt and decisive rather than judicial or correct in his judgments concerning men and things; he was arbitrary, harsh, bad-tempered, and impulsive;

he often committed acts of injustice or cruelty, for which he rarely made amends and still more rarely seemed disturbed by remorse or regret. . . . Undoubtedly Mr. Lincoln was the only ruler known to history who could have coöperated for years with such a minister." [1]

Beside this verdict of the historian let us place the contemporary judgment of Gideon Welles, remembering, however, that the Secretary of the Navy viewed all his colleagues with a sternly critical eye. After reading his shrewd but acrid pages, I ask myself how Hamilton and Jefferson would have appeared under similar scrutiny.

But upon Stanton Welles is more severe than upon any one else, even Seward, and the following comments are amplified again and again in the fifteen hundred pages of the "Diary": "He is impulsive, not administrative; has quickness, often rashness, when he has nothing to apprehend; is more violent than vigorous, more demonstrative than discriminating, more vain than wise; is rude, arrogant, and domineering towards those in subordinate positions if they will submit to his rudeness, but is a sycophant and dissembler in deportment and language with those whom he fears." [2]

These general indictments are surely savage enough. But we can support them by much other testimony as to special phases. It is generally considered that the secretary had an unfortunate

habit of interfering in technical military matters; and though his enthusiastic biographer believes him to have been born as great in strategy as in everything else, critics in general are not of this opinion. Moreover, whatever he set out to do he persisted in, and he had an incredible reluctance to admit that he had made a mistake.

It is said, further, that, independent of excessive confidence in his own military judgment, Stanton liked to exercise authority in all things, big and little. "Drunk with the lust of power," Piatt calls him,[3] somewhat rhetorically, and Grant, in more sober language, comments on his natural disposition "to assume all power and control in all matters that he had anything whatever to do with." [4] Equally severe is the remark of Welles: "Mr. Stanton was fond of power and its exercise. It was more precious to him than pecuniary gain to dominate over his fellow men." [5]

The passion for power naturally breeds jealousy of the power of others and animosity against those who resist one's authority or interfere with it. Seward told Bigelow that Stanton was of a jealous disposition.[6] Blaine declares that the Secretary, with an uncontrollable greed for fame, had its necessary counterpart, jealousy and envy of the increasing reputation of others.[7] Mr. Rhodes thinks that he was "incapable of generosity to a prostrate foe."[8]

Also, in such a fiercely energetic nature, jealousy

and animosity could not remain in the condition of sentiment, but were bound to be quickly translated into accordant action. Those who thwarted the Secretary in his purpose had to suffer, all the more because he usually managed to identify his personal antagonists with the enemies of his country. "He used the fearful power of the Government to crush those he hated, while he sought, through the same means, to elevate those he loved," says one who knew him well.[9] Nor did he hesitate at methods, when the object to be attained was an important one. Thus, he is said to have abstracted bodily certain official records in which one of his favorites was harshly treated.[10]

We do not expect charges of arbitrariness and violence to be combined with accusations of duplicity. It happens, however, with this much-abused man. There is Welles, of course, hacking away, as usual: "He has cunning and skill, dissembles his feelings, in short, is a hypocrite, a moral coward, while affecting to be, and to a certain extent being, brusque, overvaliant in words."[11] But on this point Welles has many to support him. It is charged by some that Stanton entered Buchanan's Cabinet and then betrayed his chief to his Republican enemies. The general statement of McClellan, that the Secretary would say one thing to a man's face and just the reverse behind his back,[12] may perhaps be attributed to McClellan's own state of mind. But it is difficult

to set aside entirely the general's account of Stanton's extreme enthusiasm and even subservience in their early acquaintance as compared with the steady opposition of a little later period. And it is much more difficult to set aside Stanton's explicit warning to McClellan that Halleck was probably the greatest scoundrel and most barefaced villain in America, while at the very same time the Secretary was sending word to Halleck through Hitchcock that he had never had any other than the highest respect for him and hoped Halleck would not imagine that he ever had.[13] In Stanton's high-handed treatment of Sherman as to his compact with Johnston at the close of the war, Sherman's brother, the Senator, does not know whether to read profound duplicity or, as Mr. Rhodes does, a sudden impulse of violent irritation. "He manifested and assumed the intensest kindness for you," John Sherman writes, "and certainly showed it to me. I still think that with him it was mere anger — the explosion of a very bad temper." [14]

And, as the accusation of duplicity almost necessarily implies, Stanton was further charged with truckling to those who had power and influence, just as he bullied those who had none. Welles declares that the Secretary of War regarded himself as the protégé of Seward and always treated him with obsequiousness and servility, that he was an adept at flattering and

wheedling members of Congress and pandering to their whims and fancies, that he behaved to Andrew Johnson as fawningly at first as he did roughly at last. Welles adds further that he himself met Stanton's browbeating with a determined front, and from that time on was treated with a deference shown to few members of the Cabinet. Mr. John T. Morse writes vividly, referring to the Sherman quarrel: "Stanton had that peculiar and unusual form of meanness which endeavors to force a civility after an insult." [15] And Blaine, who on other points praised Stanton highly, admits that he had great respect for men who had power and considered their wishes in a way quite unusual with him in ordinary cases.[16]

It is even asserted that the Secretary's bullying manner melted at once before conduct equally aggressive, and other experiences are told similar to that of Colonel Dwight, who went to get a pass for an old man to visit his dying son. The pass was refused, whereupon the colonel said: "My name is Dwight, Walton Dwight, lieutenant-colonel of the One Hundred and Forty-ninth Regiment of Pennsylvania volunteers. You can dismiss me from the service as soon as you like, but I am going to tell you what I think of you." He did, and got his pass.[17]

Some go so far as to maintain that this appearance of moral cowardice was accompanied by a decided lack of mere physical courage. Such a

charge is pretty strongly implied in Grant's accusation that Stanton's timidity made him keep the armies near Washington, that he could see the Union weakness, but not that of the enemy, and that the Confederates would have been in no danger if Stanton had been in the field.[18] Mr. Rhodes speaks quite frankly of the Secretary's "lack of physical courage." [19] Welles had no doubt whatever upon the subject. His account of Stanton's behavior after the murder of Lincoln should be read with care, though with a clear recollection that Welles did not know his associate at all intimately and saw him, as for that matter he saw himself, through a cloud of prejudice. Still another paragraph from the Secretary of the Navy's "Diary" I cannot resist quoting in full, for its vivid picture of Stanton and also its unconscious and thoroughly Pepysian portrayal of the writer. It refers to the wild excitement in the Cabinet, when it was feared that the Merrimac would advance upon Washington: "In all that painful time my composure was not disturbed, so that I did not perhaps as fully realize and comprehend the whole impending calamity as others, and yet to me there was throughout the whole day something inexpressibly ludicrous in the wild, frantic talk, action, and rage of Stanton as he ran from room to room, sat down and jumped up after writing a few words, swung his arms, scolded, and raved. He could not fail to see and feel my

opinion of him and his bluster — that I was calm and unmoved by his rant, spoke deliberately, and was not excited by his violence." [20]

There must be something inspiring in the joyous, salt freedom of the sea which could impel two secretaries of the navy, at two hundred years' interval, to expose themselves to posterity with such incomparable frankness.

II

But as to Stanton. After perusing with attention the above cheerful catalogue of amiable qualities, the reader must be inclined to ask, with Malcolm in "Macbeth," "If such a one be fit to govern, speak," and to expect something like Macduff's answer, "Fit to govern, no, not to live!"

We shall try a little later to emphasize some acts and characteristics of Stanton which may not seem wholly compatible with all these charges of his critics. Meantime, it must be evident, whether the charges are true, or, still more, if they are exaggerated and untrue, that the Secretary was not a man who went out of his way to be agreeable. He certainly was not. His position in itself forced him to acts that seemed harsh and even cruel. The Secretary of War had to tread on many toes and scorch many fingers. But it is possible to tread on toes so that the owner of them will remember it with tolerance, if not with

amiability. Stanton trod squarely and provoked a groan or an oath.

Indeed, there are many who agree with Grant that the Secretary took positive pleasure in refusing requests and disappointing suitors.[21] If this seems an extreme view, at least it cannot be denied that in the ordinary transaction of business he paid little attention to social amenities. Dana, who admired him much, admitted that he would have been a far greater man if he could have kept his temper.[22] Chittenden, who admired him somewhat less, but knew him intimately, declares that few masters of literary denunciation were more apt at inflicting a bitter wound in a brief sentence.[23] The same authority adds that efforts to ingratiate by compliment were rarely repeated, for the Secretary would repel the first one by a shaft of satire or a glance of contempt.[24] His daily receptions appear at times to have been of the nature of shindies. In one case, recorded even by the enthusiastic biographer, an interview with a Senator rose to such a pitch of vehemence that the Secretary dashed a full inkstand all over the floor, while in another he emerged from the office with his nose bleeding so freely that cracked ice was required to repair damages.[25]

There is abundant and most curious evidence as to the manifestation of these volcanic peculiarities in the Secretary's official intercourse with his subordinates. Soldiers are accustomed to treat one

another with the precision of military civility, prefacing orders with salutation and politeness. Stanton had bells put into the different rooms of the War Office. When he wanted to call a general, he pulled a cord, as if he were calling a messenger. Generals did not like it.

Also, Stanton's manner of imparting information and receiving requests was not such as to inspire cordiality or gratitude. For instance, Schurz writes, inquiring if he is relieved from command. The Secretary replies: "General Hooker is authorized to relieve from command any officer that interferes with or hinders the transportation of troops in the present movement. Whether you have done so, and whether he has relieved you from command, ought to be known to yourself." [26] When your cheek is slapped like that, it stings for some time after. Again, an official in high place politely suggested a young friend for a position. "Usher," was the sharp reply, "I would not appoint the Angel Gabriel a paymaster, if he was only twenty-one." [27]

III

Undoubtedly posterity has been most affected by Stanton's rudeness and violence as they concerned Lincoln. The display of these qualities began long before the war and before the two men had any official connection with each other. When they were scarcely acquainted, chance brought

them together on the same side of a lawsuit, and Lincoln overheard Stanton say that "he would not associate with such a d——d, gawky, long-armed ape as that." [28] After the war had begun, Stanton, still keeping up epistolary intercourse with his former chief, Buchanan, wrote, in terms more civil, but hardly more complimentary: "An irretrievable misfortune and national disgrace never to be forgotten are to be added to the ruin of all peaceful pursuits and national bankruptcy, as the result of Lincoln's 'running the machine' for five months." [29] And to Dix he expressed himself more frankly as to the "painful imbecility" [30] of the President. According to McClellan, his language in private conversation was franker still. Lincoln, he said, was the original gorilla, and Du Chaillu need not have gone to Africa to investigate that animal. [31]

Such utterances are not recorded of the Cabinet officer, who had come to know the President more intimately. But the Secretary was just as ready to snub his chief in the course of business as any one else. Again and again he slighted and disregarded Lincoln's suggestions and recommendations, in well-authenticated cases going so far as to tear the President's notes and fling them into the waste-basket before the eyes of the bearer, with an expression of perfect contempt. Also, the Secretary's admirers, and perhaps the Secretary himself, to some degree, felt that he was the Presi-

dent's chief monitor and by peremptory argument could sway that amiable but somewhat spineless personage into the course dictated by wisdom and patriotism. An instance of this, important if true, is the vehement persuasion by which Stanton is said to have modified the second inaugural, insisting that his superior was too ready to surrender power to the generals in the field. Lincoln, after listening to the Secretary's arguments, murmured, "You are right," seized the pen, and made the changes suggested.[32]

In spite of occasional insolence, however, and of a tendency to domineer in small matters, there can be no question that Stanton came early to recognize Lincoln's supremacy, and on vital points, after due and energetic protest, submitted his own will to that of his chief. When Lincoln had fairly made up his mind to be obeyed, he was obeyed. Many cases of sharp conflict can be summed up in the crucial one narrated by Nicolay and Hay in which the President backed a positive order by a personal interview. "Mr. President," said the Secretary, "I cannot execute that order." "Mr. Secretary," replied Lincoln, with perfect good-nature and with perfect firmness, "I reckon you'll have to execute that order." The order was executed.[33]

And Stanton not only obeyed his leader, he admired and loved him. From a man so sparing of commendation, written words like the following

mean much. They are full of significance, not only as to Stanton's own feeling, but as to the relations between the two men: "Mr. Lincoln was never a good projector and frequently not a good manager; but his intuition was wonderful. He was one of the best of men to have by the side of a projector or manager. . . . Usually his mind was as free from bias as any I ever knew, and it was a genuine pleasure to consult him on new matters." [34] While the eulogy quoted from Chittenden by Mr. Rothschild, in his admirable analysis, is one of the finest ever pronounced by one mortal man upon another: "There lies the most perfect ruler of men the world has ever seen." [35]

And now, how did Lincoln feel about Stanton? It would appear that the President selected this member of his Cabinet more for actual merit than almost any of the others. The War Department was the most important of all. Up to January, 1862, Cameron had failed in it entirely. The new man must be chosen not for politics, though a War Democrat was desirable, nor for personal adaptability, but because he could do the work. Lincoln had at the start certainly no reason to feel any affection for Stanton. He must therefore have picked him out by divining his extraordinary usefulness.

Having chosen him, he proposed to leave him free, so far as possible. One disappointed applicant for secretarial favor is said to have reported the encouraging reply that the President was a

damned fool. "Did Stanton say that?" was Lincoln's serene comment. "Then it must be true, for Stanton is usually right." [86] In many other cases it was made perfectly evident that, having appointed a strong man to a difficult place, the President felt that he could best get full measure out of him by letting him have his head almost — not quite — completely.

And Lincoln not only tolerated his subordinate, he defended him. When it was urged that Stanton's work might be done quite as well by some one else who would do it less disagreeably, the President replied, in substance: "Find the man. Show me that he can do it. He shall."

Also, there was love in that ample heart for the stern Secretary, as well as respect and confidence. Does not all Lincoln's divine tenderness show in Stanton's own account of their last interview, just before Lincoln's death, when the Secretary, feeling that his task was done, offered his resignation, and the President refused it? "Putting his hands on my shoulders, tears filling his eyes, he said, 'Stanton, you cannot go. Reconstruction is more difficult and dangerous than construction or destruction. You have been our main reliance; you must help us through the final act. The bag is filled. It must be tied, and tied securely. Some knots slip; yours do not. You understand the situation better than anybody else, and it is my wish and the country's that you remain.'" [87]

It has, indeed, been suggested that Stanton's main use to his chief was as a shield or buffer. Most men dislike to say no. Certainly Lincoln did. Yet he had to, till he must sometimes have seemed to himself the negative personified. Now to say no is thought to have given Stanton real pleasure. And the President was delighted to have a deputy of such solid qualifications. Grant rejects this view on the ground that Lincoln did not need to borrow backbone from any one. We know he did not. Yet when life was made up so largely of doing disagreeable things, it was surely policy to use a man who did them with masterly ease and a connoisseur's perfection.

IV

Yet probably no one living could have divined more keenly or appreciated more sympathetically the fine qualities of the subordinate than the leader who selected him and got out of him every ounce of his efficiency and usefulness. Let us go below the rough surface and distinguish more closely what some of those fine qualities were.

To begin with, in spite of his harsh, stern exterior, the man had wonderful depths of emotion and nervous sensibility. I think you can see it in his face — when you have discovered it otherwise. It was he who made that most original and subtle observation — enough in itself to mark exceptional insight — when some one objected to his

criticism of the meanness in a man's face as being something for which the man was not responsible, "A man of fifty is responsible for his face."[38] Apply the criterion to its inventor and you will see energy and determination in the brow and eyes and lines about the nose, but assuredly you will see sensibility about the large and mobile mouth.

Again, the voice matched the mouth. It is said to have been a wonderfully gentle, sympathetic, and responsive voice, never more so than when uttering savage indignation or bitter criticism.[39]

And back of the voice was a nervous, high-strung, responsive spirit. When good fortune came, the spirit was exuberant, cried out in triumph, embraced friends near, and sent official telegrams of boyish exultation to friends distant. "Good for the first lick! Hurrah for Smith and the one-gun battery!" [40] Or when there was simply a relief from strain, the emotion was different but violent still. "His real feeling came to the surface. Great tears welled up in his eyes and flowed over his careworn face." [41] With disappointment and failure the sensibility was no less, whether shown in tears of bitterness or in the strange manifestations of excited and overwrought nerves. Such things both accompany and produce physical weakness, and during all the years of his great and strenuous service Stanton was apparently a broken man. It is said that even before the war he had been warned by skilled physicians that unless he pur-

sued a regular and quiet life, he might die at any moment.[42] A regular and quiet life!

One frequent concomitant of sensitive nerves, humor, seems to have been mainly absent in Stanton. There are stories of his gayety in early youth, stories of mirth and laughter and social expansiveness. It is most interesting to find him telling Dickens that the novelist's works were his nightly resource and diversion and that he did not know how he could get through his task without them.[43] We find an occasional jest on his lips also. But the jests are apt to be ardent and bitter. The pettiness of even his vast labors, viewed under the aspect of eternity, did not strike him as constantly as it did Lincoln, and we learn from Chase that when the President prefaced the Emancipation Proclamation with choice bits from Petroleum V. Nasby — bells tinkling and clattering in that great tragic scene like the babble of the clown in "Lear" — Stanton was the only Cabinet member present who did not laugh.

But if he had not the twinkle of laughter, he had the glow of deep affection. It is true, indeed, that he does not appear to have loved or trusted widely. Some, who had good opportunities for judging, have written that he permitted no one to know him well and that no man so widely known was ever so little known.[44] I find also the assertion — startlingly characteristic about any man — that "love was not necessary to him."[45]

This I do not believe to be true. Indeed, the evidence shows it to be emphatically untrue. Stanton was not one of those who dissipate their affection, but where he bestowed it entire, it was all the more overwhelming. One need only read the history of his first marriage to appreciate this. It was a pure love match, between a boy and girl, and the husband's devotion was as complete and lasting as was the father's delight when children came to him. Years afterwards Stanton declared that "the happiest hours of his life were passed in the little brick house on Third Street, holding [his daughter] Lucy on his knee while Mary prepared the meals." [46] The girl wife's early death was the bitterest sorrow Stanton ever knew. For months he entirely gave up his legal work, spent hours at her grave, wandered into quaint and melancholy fancies which almost indicated lack of mental balance. His character is even said to have undergone a fundamental change, the natural gayety of his youth giving place to a settled austerity and gloom. But such changes as this grow in the imagination of those who narrate them.

One striking incident of a later time illustrates well the blend of intense passions in the heart of this volcanic creature. During his secretaryship he was sitting one day in his study with his little daughter on his knee. A friend thought it a good opportunity to plead for a Southern father under sentence of death. He pointed out to Stanton the

joy of his own fatherhood and the child's complete dependence upon him. Stanton assented with enthusiasm. "But there are daughters in the South who cherish their fathers just as much." "I suppose there are," was the indifferent reply. "Now there's Pryor —" The Secretary instantly pushed the child from his knee and thundered, "He shall be hanged! Damn him!" [47]

It must not be inferred from this, however, that Stanton's tenderness was confined to the domestic circle. Far from it. He may not have made friends widely, but he had a broad and generous kindliness, if you knew how to get at it and separate it from his temper and his prejudices. Above all, where his heart was touched, he would make any effort to relieve suffering. As a mere boy, he organized a charity league to watch with the sick and to assist the poor.[48] Once, when he was traveling to Pittsburg by boat, he found a poor Irishman with a broken leg, on the way to have it set. The man was suffering cruelly, but no one paid much attention. Stanton went to the carpenter for tools, made a splint, set the leg and put the splint on with proper bandages, and sat by the patient, bathing his forehead, till the boat arrived.[49]

Even in his official duties the Secretary tempered roughness with sympathy in a most notable manner. He was harsh to generals with epaulets, but when he saw a crippled soldier waiting patiently, he would listen to him first and speak

gently, even if he could not say yes. In the same way, while he was often bitter to his subordinates, he often also regretted his bitterness and would show his regret by some special kindness or unusual display of confidence. It is most curious to note, however, that he rarely apologized directly or admitted that he had been wrong, seeming to feel that such admission would compromise his dignity. In this, he surely showed a significant trait of character and stamped himself as somewhat below the greatest.

It is interesting to have not only the testimony of others to Stanton's mixture of sympathy with severity, but his own personal confession of the strain involved in the execution of his duty. Thus, he is said to have protested with the utmost solemnity, "In my official station I have tried to do my duty as I shall answer to God at the great day, but it is the misfortune of that station that most of my duties are harsh and painful to some one, so that I rejoice at an opportunity, however rare, of combining duty with kindly offices." [50] Still more interesting is the dramatic account of one who was intimately familiar with the workings of the War Department and who one day, after watching the Secretary's stern, cold dealings with petitioners and resenting them as almost inhuman, followed without announcement into his private office and there found him bent over his desk, his head buried in his hands, shaken with

sobs and wailing in anguish, "God help me to do my duty; God help me to do my duty." [51]

It seems hard to reconcile these things with the legend of Stanton's pleasure in saying no. Yet perhaps they are not wholly incompatible, after all. In that case, such contradictions certainly make him a figure of unusual, of extraordinary interest.

V

Nevertheless, it may be granted that Lincoln did not select Stanton as Minister of War for his sympathy or for his gentleness. What, then, were the other qualities which made the President pick out this sturdy agent and stand by him?

First, he was a worker, an enormous worker. Welles denies this and proves by doing so that he did not know Stanton. For his inclination and his capacity for labor are beyond dispute. In the early law practice at his Ohio home he toiled early and late to get the facts, all the facts, even those irrelevant, with the hope of finding something neglected which would solve the difficulty, as he often did. When he was sent to California by the Government to investigate the old Mexican land titles, it is confessed that his researches into records and documents were as far-reaching as they were fruitful. In the War Department he looked into everything himself, went into case after case with exhaustive and exhausting thoroughness, mastered

the details of contracts, of supply, of equipment, of transportation, and saw that those details were attended to. Executive genius often consists in knowing how to make others work, and no doubt Stanton was expert in this function; but when anything was to be gained by doing work himself, he did it, as in the case mentioned by Flower of the cotton investigation at Savannah in 1865. Stanton selected twenty witnesses out of a vast number present and wrote down the testimony of each, unabridged, though his assistants offered to do it for him.[52] He held that by doing it himself he would get a knowledge of the subject which could not be filtered through any clerk.

Even more important than labor, and essential to fruitful labor, are method, system, organization. Stanton possessed this business instinct in the highest degree. From the moment he took hold of the war machine, he saw that every part was in order, so that his own work and others' work would not be thrown away. His procedure in this line was often vexatious, as when he arranged to have telegraphic dispatches from general to general and even from the President to other members of the Cabinet pass through his office and come under his eye, if necessary. But it was immensely thorough and effective. An exact routine governed his daily labor. During certain hours he stood at his desk and accorded a systematically proportioned allowance of minutes to the numerous visi-

tors, who had each to state his business with absolute clearness and brevity and in a tone to be heard by the bystanders.

But often the visitor found his business stated for him. For the Secretary had little patience with many words and had a marvelous gift of divining what was wanted, had, indeed, the most quick and piercing fashion of getting at the heart of any piece of business, before another would have stripped off even the husk of it. It was just this keenness of insight which enabled him, when not led astray by prejudice, to detect men of swift practical ability for the execution of his purposes.

And back of the labor, the system, the insight, was the animating soul, an enormous, driving energy, which thrust right on through obstacles and difficulties, would not yield, would not falter, would not turn back. Sometimes this energy was misdirected and overzealous, as in some of the arbitrary arrests for treason, which may have done more harm than good. But lesser men, who stop to hesitate and question, cannot but wonder at the splendid, forthright, overpowering accomplishment. As Thurlow Weed wrote, divining the future in 1861: "While I was in the White House, I looked over that new Attorney-General of ours. He is tremendous." [53]

This abounding vigor showed in the Secretary's words, written and spoken. "The very demon of lying seems to be about these times, and generals

will have to be broken for ignorance before they will take the trouble to find out the truth of reports." " It showed constantly in his actions. When he went West to push a military movement, the train was driven as it had never been driven before. "Shall we get there?" asked Stanton, anxious to drive harder. "Great God!" answered the engineer, "you'll get through alive if I do." "

As you follow the different phases of Stanton's activity, you will be amazed to see this clear-eyed, ordered energy displayed in all of them. Supplies? He gets supplies on honest contracts, of the stipulated quality, and furnishes them, when and where needed. A navy? If he wants a navy on the Western rivers, and Father Noah or Father Neptune — Welles, of the patriarchal beard, was known by either title — frets and fidgets over difficulties, he just makes a navy, out of nothing. Railroads? The very life and heart of the war depend on railroads. Stanton sees it and gets men like Haupt and McCallum out of civil life to do feats of engineering which command the admiration not of America only, but of the world.

Or, in another connection, take Stanton's handling of the state governors, so justly praised by Mr. Rhodes. Tact and patience were needed here to adjust endless tangles of red tape. The Secretary showed that, if required, he had the tact and the patience as well as the energy.

That a man of this stamp should have been a

personal coward is very difficult to believe. I am inclined to think that any charges made against Stanton in this line are based upon the vagaries of a highly excitable temperament, which may have momentarily betrayed its possessor in the quick presence of certain kinds of physical peril. However this may be, the man gave many proofs of complete indifference to danger when he was doing his duty. Thus, in defending a poisoner, with the object of testing the drug used, he took a good dose of it himself and was seriously ill in consequence.[56] Again, when cholera was prevailing, he stepped right in and worked among the sick, after priest and doctor had deserted them, and went so far as to open the coffin of a young girl, because he had some fear that she might have been buried alive.[57] These are not exactly the actions of a coward.

Whether physically brave or not, Stanton assuredly did not in general lack the moral courage to say no. Graft, corruption, and dishonesty withered when they came within his touch. Welles, always resourceful in fault-finding, and brought up in good traditions of New England thrift, declares that his colleague was utterly wasteful of public money, and that anybody could be a great war minister who did not care what he spent. Perhaps the absurdity of the latter assertion may help to discredit the former, which is not generally made or accepted. At any rate,

neither Welles nor any one else ever accused the Secretary of direct or indirect peculation, or even ventured to imply that the war brought him personal profit. On the contrary, he left office and died poorer than he was at an earlier period. Before his death he was in actual distress and obliged to borrow money for his immediate necessities. Yet he obstinately refused a large sum subscribed by his friends, not as charity, but in simple recognition of his splendid service to his country.

Thus it is evident that he was capable of great personal sacrifice, and this is true, not only as regards money, but as regards other things. During the time of his public service he gave up all social diversion, all amusement of any kind, that every minute might be devoted to the duties of his office. That his acceptance of a Cabinet position was as entirely a matter of sacrifice as he asserted may be open to some doubt. The love of power and the ambition to exercise it were vital to his temperament, and to be the motive force in such an event as the Civil War was an opportunity no lover of power could despise. But it may be said with justice that Stanton was one of the few men of his calibre who never gave a thought to the Presidency, and it is probable that, as the war progressed, every conscious personal preoccupation became merged in the daily and nightly struggle to perform tasks too mighty for any human brains or shoulders.

VI

In the performance of these tasks we see Stanton rather as doer than as thinker. His keen intelligence was the servant of his will, not the master of it. And though he would have much preferred thinking on abstract problems to being quiet, his abstract thinking has little interest except as developing his character. In youth he ardently desired to write a book on "The Poetry of the Bible," calling attention to the fact that "God, in all his communications with man, clothed his language in the highest imagery." [58] I am glad he did not, as I should have had to read it.

Also, his intellectual quality, from the religious point of view, is well indicated in the account of his settlement of speculative difficulties. "Mr. Stanton always had a profound reverence for the Supreme Being, but at one time was disinclined to regard the Bible as an inspired work. Finally he took a copy of it into a room in his dwelling, and, turning the key, resolved not to come forth until he had satisfied himself on that point. He continued in his room so long a time that his young wife became alarmed, fearing he was going crazy. He emerged at last fully satisfied that the Bible is what it purports to be, the Word of God, and he never thereafter doubted." [59] This seems more like the "will to believe" cutting the Gordian knots of theology than like patient intel-

ligence seeking to unravel them by curious analysis.

Stanton's general intellectual force is well gauged by the extraordinary paragraph in his letter to Dana, written in February, 1862: "Much has been said of military combinations and organizing victory. I hear such phrases with apprehension. They commenced in infidel France with the Italian campaigns and resulted in Waterloo. Who can organize victory? Who can combine the elements of success on the battlefield? We owe our recent victories to the spirit of the Lord that moved our soldiers to rush into battle and filled the hearts of our enemies with dismay." [60]

This sort of thing recalls the talk — not the action — of Stonewall Jackson, and in some respects there was a striking resemblance between the two men. Neither was attractive in his ordinary relations with his fellows. Neither treated his subordinates with tact or tenderness. Each had the energy, the resistless rush, of a natural force, overcoming all obstacles in the indomitable effort to attain a simple end. That the likeness does not extend to actual military genius, it is hardly necessary to point out. Stanton's biographer does, indeed, maintain that his favorite showed himself a great general by capturing Norfolk. I am not aware that this conclusion is shared by any other writer about the Civil War. On the contrary, many hold that the Secretary

had a singular gift for thwarting the military inspirations of others.

There can be no doubt as to the simple end toward which all Stanton's energies were directed: it was not personal advantage; it was not party triumph; it was not even the abolition of slavery; it was constantly and above everything the restoration and preservation of the Union. That he was always discreet or tactful in laboring for this end will be maintained by no one. Sometimes there was an element of pig-headed obstinacy in his effort, as in the contest with Andrew Johnson over the War Department in 1866, when the Secretary may have been right in principle, but appears almost as undignified as the President in actual method. Yet under all tactlessness and all indiscretion there lay the one passionate, masterful, irresistible purpose, to fight over all things and through all things and beyond all things that the inheritors of the American Revolution on this continent might form but one indissoluble, prosperous, peaceful nation, the United States of America.

"If the Cause fails, you and I will be covered with prosecutions, imprisoned, driven from the country," said Morton to Stanton. And Stanton answered, in his softest voice, "If the Cause fails, I do not care to live." [61]

Also, his own written words give a noble, an imperishable reiteration and elaboration of the

same idea: "I hold my present post at the request of the President, who knew me personally, but to whom I had not spoken from the 4th of March, 1861, until the day he handed me my commission. I knew that everything I cherished and hold dear would be sacrificed by accepting office. But I thought I might help to save the country and for that I was willing to perish. If I wanted to be a politician or a candidate for any office, would I stand between the treasury and the robbers who are howling around me? Would I provoke and stand against the whole newspaper gang in the country, of every party, who to sell news would imperil a battle? I was never taken for a fool, but there could be no greater madness than for a man to encounter what I do for anything else than motives that overleap time and look forward to eternity. I believe that God Almighty founded this Government and for my acts in the effort to maintain it I expect to stand before Him in judgment." [62]

It is perhaps permitted to a man to be exceedingly disagreeable, when he feels and thinks and speaks like that.

VII

WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Florida, New York, May 16, 1801.
Entered Union College, 1816.
Graduated, Union College, 1820.
Admitted to the bar, 1822.
Married Frances Miller, October 20, 1824.
State Senator, 1831–34.
Governor of New York, 1838–42.
United States Senator, 1849–61.
Secretary of State, 1861–69.
Went round the world, 1869, 1870.
Died, October 10, 1872.

VII

WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD

I

THE problem with Seward is exactly the reverse of that with Stanton. In Stanton's case we had to discover the strong qualities which enabled the man to make his way in spite of an extreme and well-founded unpopularity. Seward, on the other hand, was generally popular, and aimed to be so, to such an extent that it might at first be questioned whether this was not the main basis of his distinguished success.

He played politics as naturally as he breathed. In 1830, when only twenty-nine years old, he entered the senate of his native State, New York. With suitable intervals of law, he became Governor and United States Senator, and did all that a party leader could do to be nominated for the Presidency, instead of Lincoln, in 1860. Failing in this, he was content to be, on the whole, the ablest and most influential member of the Cabinet under Lincoln and Andrew Johnson.

He studied, or acquired without study, the art of influencing and persuading men. He was not a great orator, like Webster, or even Sumner, had no stately and impressive manner, dealt compara-

tively little in orotund and swelling periods. His voice was not attractive and his carriage not always graceful. Yet what he said had great effect, because it was simple, direct, and natural. He spoke in public like a man talking at his fireside and persuaded you because he seemed to be taking you right into the movement of his thoughts. Yet with this appearance of candor he had the very great art of combining the most careful study and preparation. Halleck's scornful remark about him, that "these infernal old political humbugs cannot tell the truth even when it is for their interest to do so,"[1] is quite inappropriate. Seward knew perfectly well when to plan to tell the truth and when not.

He worked out his speeches with the utmost care, turned them over to the reporters before he delivered them, and always, always looked far beyond the immediate audience, whether it was the United States Senate or a nondescript political gathering, to the vast congregation of the American people. Few of our statesmen have made themselves so widely listened to and appreciated as he. This Lincoln knew, and estimated Seward's eloquence exactly at its true value. They were once making a trip in a sleeping-car together, and when they stopped at some small town, there was clamor for a speech. Lincoln absolutely refused, said he had to do enough of it in Washington. Then, rolling over in his berth, he murmured,

"Seward, you go out and repeat some of your poetry to the people." [2]

But Seward had resources of political management far broader than his tongue. His partial biographer says that he had no capacity for political intrigue.[3] On the other hand, one who knew him well and admired him greatly declares that "he combined men largely through their selfish, not their holier affections; their love of themselves rather than of their fellow creatures or of God. As a consequence he was followed to his grave by only a few men beholden to him for political favors — outside of his own townsmen." [4]

It is certain that, whether by intrigue or not, Seward had an extraordinary faculty of developing and directing political movements. He had two qualities of the greatest value in this regard. One was the ability to give an impression of power. This particularly affected Schurz. "He made upon me, as well as upon many others, the impression of a man who controlled hidden, occult powers which he could bring into play if he would." [5] Seward's other gift was that of enlisting the devoted service of men who admired and believed in him and were able and willing to do things he did not care to do himself. By far the most important among these followers was Thurlow Weed, who may be regarded as Seward's evil angel or familiar devil, just as you please. Accident brought them together and mutual usefulness bred a deep affec-

tion. Weed was by no means the thoroughly corrupt New York politician of later days. He played the game more for the pleasure of it than for personal profit. But he knew every move and invented some not known to others, and as manager, mentor, and scapegoat, all in one, he was an indispensable aid in the perfecting of Seward's ample career.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Seward's popularity was all a matter of political calculation. He was liked because he was likeable, because he was amiable, because he met courteously not only courtesy, but discourtesy and churlishness also. He himself said, "We never can succeed by making people mad," [6] and though there are some who pursue this policy to the point of exasperation, Seward apparently did not. If his antagonists abused him, he turned it off with a soft answer. "Benjamin," he remarked, after the Jewish Senator had been particularly violent, "give me a cigar and when your speech is printed send me a copy." [7] Lincoln said of him that he was "a man without gall," [8] and Dana that though forever in fights, he had almost no personal enemies.[9] Seward himself repeatedly contributes his own testimony as to this beatific atmosphere in which he lived. He had no enemies, he tells us, was on good terms with every one, all the Senators were well-disposed toward him. As to his own State, he asserts, with touching candor: "I have

not one enemy in this section to forgive. I know of no one who will utter a personal complaint against me." [10]

It is true, there are some discordant voices. The temper on which the Secretary prided himself did flaw occasionally, as when he told the President that there were too many secretaries of state in Washington,[11] or snapped out at a troublesome applicant for office: "Why come to me about this? Go to the White House! I, who by every right ought to have been chosen President, what am I now? Nothing but Abe Lincoln's little — clerk."[12]

Also, there is the crusty Welles, who leaves no illusions unshattered and liked Seward very little better than he liked Stanton. Temper? He can tell stories of the Secretary's temper! No enemies? It sounds well, but the truth is Seward is universally distrusted and disliked, and not without some cause.[13] As for the State of New York, Welles accompanied a presidential party to the Secretary's home town, Auburn, and found it a nest of petty bickerings and jealousies.[14]

But Welles must not mislead us, and Seward's great personal charm, in private life as well as in public, is undeniable. Socially he seems to have been delightful. He liked ease and good cheer to such a point that absurd charges of excess were sometimes brought against him. He was a most interesting and vivid talker, and what is curious about the record of his conversation is that it was

not in the least that of a man who is making an effort to please or to seduce, but was frank, straightforward, and thoroughly personal, sometimes even to the point of indiscretion or oddity. Above all, he had the art, so rare in great talkers and in men who have made their way in the world, of being a good listener. In short, it appears that he had a remarkable and often exquisite gift of adaptability.

Then he was by nature full of joy and hope. Occasional hints of depression do occur in the enormous mass of his correspondence, like the following: "This day has been a worthless one. I feel wretchedly, always, when I have to retire to bed with the reflection that I have accomplished nothing I ought to have done, and learned nothing I ought to know." [15] But these bits are very rare and sound, like the above, as if written partly for effect. There are few men who have been so charmed at birth by the goddess of good-humor. The touch of this deity sometimes gets her favorites into trouble. But, after all, could a man desire a sweeter eulogy than that bestowed by Seward's son upon his father, and no doubt true at all periods of life? "The house was always cheerful when he was in it." [16]

Whether back of this constant amiability and gayety there was any very profound sympathy or tenderness is open to doubt. Do these bright and cheerful spirits ever deal extensively in overpower-

ing and concentrated emotion? Seward's love for his wife and children is always manifest and always attractive. To his wife especially he writes with intimate candor and deep respect and regard for her most helpful judgment. Also, he did many acts of thoughtful kindness. As a single example of these one should read Mrs. Jefferson Davis's account of his frequent visits to her husband during a severe illness and of the benefit derived from his serene and comforting presence. Another significant bit of real human feeling is the Secretary's attempt to keep a diary when he first entered Lincoln's Cabinet and his decision to drop it, after a very few days, because, if veracious, it would involve recording so much that was petty and disagreeable.[17] These scruples do not seem to have beset the worthy Gideon Welles. Moreover, Seward had unquestionably a keen sensitiveness to the sight of trouble and distress. Although an experienced lawyer, the torture to which one poor criminal was subjected in court affected him so deeply that he was obliged to leave the courtroom completely overcome by tears.

Yet, in spite of all this, I do not get the impression of a man whose affections could ever seriously disturb his peace. There are even those who say that the amiability and kindness were largely rooted in worldly wisdom. Thus, the venomous Gurowski, after remarking that the Secretary of State is by no means given to speaking evil of any

one, feels constrained to add that this is a matter of policy.[18] And a far juster observer than Gurowski asserts, in contradiction of Seward's own confession that he had no memory for injuries,[19] that "he was a good hater and lay in wait to punish his foes," instancing the disasters which fell upon New York Republicans who had opposed the Senator's nomination for the Presidency.[20]

So the penalty that attends a generally amiable and courteous manner — that of being called insincere — was not escaped by Seward, any more than by others. At the beginning of his public life Clay said that he had no convictions.[21] At the end of it Andrew Johnson, with fine ingratitude, repeated, in his odd vocabulary, that "Mr. Seward seems to have no cardinals." [22] Blair believed that the Secretary would betray any man who stood in his way,[23] and Welles expresses or implies a similar view *ad libitum*.

Seward's half-ironical fashion of talking encouraged many of these interpretations. Thus, he said to Piatt, condemning his own "higher law" speech, "My young friend, we are warned to keep to ourselves what we do not believe. It is as well, frequently, to conceal what we do believe. There is apt to be public damnation in both."[24] In the very remarkable scene described so vividly by Mrs. Davis, when Seward had smilingly avowed that a good deal of his anti-slavery talk was for mere political purposes, and the great Southern

leader, scandalized, asked, "But, Mr. Seward, do you never speak from conviction alone?" the answer was, "Nev-er." [25] To which Mrs. Davis adds the Secretary's frank avowal that truth should always be made subsidiary to an end, and if another statement could subserve that end he made it.[26] Now we see perfectly well that Seward was insincere in asserting his own insincerity. But such talk does harm with those who do not go below the surface.

II

And so much for Seward the popular orator, the dexterous and insinuating politician. But there is another side of the man, a most important side. Perhaps I cannot introduce it better than with a striking passage written by Godkin, in 1859: "He has, through twenty-five years of public life, been the steady and fearless champion of an unpopular cause, and he has every year, in speeches and state papers, given abundant evidence of the possession of the highest order of talent. . . . Perhaps the greatest constitutional lawyer in America, the clearest-headed statesman, a powerful and above all a most logical orator, and of all the public men of this country perhaps the least of a demagogue and the most of a gentleman." [27]

While Seward's keenest admirers to-day would hardly insist upon the whole of this eulogy, much of it can be supported by indisputable evidence.

Thus, however often he may have trifled, or appeared to trifle, there were times, many times, when Seward took life with energetic earnestness. He made his governorship a serious business, he made his senatorship a serious business, he made his secretaryship a serious business. It may be urged that in age he was more inclined to take things lightly than in youth, but I doubt it, though his own observation that in his younger days men were more serious than later may be read either way.[28] Some say that he catered to temporary popularity; but did ever any fighter speak out with more trumpet resonance against unmanly yielding? "They tell us that we are to encounter opposition. Why, bless my soul, did anybody ever expect to reach a fortune, or fame, or happiness on earth, or a crown in heaven, without encountering resistance and opposition? What are we made men for but to encounter and overcome opposition arrayed against us in the line of our duty?" [29]

Again, he could be not only earnest in thought, but a tremendous worker. As a lawyer, indeed, he shirked work when he could, because he hated it. Law to him was a waste of time and an enemy to the peace of life, whether lawyer's life or client's. In his vivid, petulant way he cries out, "I fear, abhor, detest, despise, and loathe litigation. The irascible, the headstrong, and the obstinate pity my peaceful disposition; yet they solicit my aid to extricate them." [30] Still, even in law he could

do more in hours than others in days and in his political calling he would labor enormously. As Governor, as Senator, as Secretary, he performed cheerfully more than his duty thrust upon him and he had that instinct of system which doubles the result of labor while it halves the burden. As with other things, he knew clearly what his own faculty of labor was, and, as with other things, he could make a jest of it. To Weed, who had pointed out various matters that needed attention, he writes: "I thought I had as much industry as anybody around me, and with it a little versatility. But I know nobody and never did know that one man who could do all you seem to think I neglect to do, as well as all the labor I actually perform."[81]

Some survey of the various lines of his activity will bring out more clearly how positive and unfailing it was. Of course the great political question all through his career was slavery, and on this he certainly cannot be ranked among the ardent idealists. It is true that in the earlier years of his senatorship the great wave of anti-slavery enthusiasm lifted him, to some extent, off his feet and carried him to the climax of asserting that there was a law higher than the Constitution, a climax which probably astonished him as it did every one else, especially when it became one of the most telling catchwords of the reform party. But we have seen him admitting to Davis that his sympathy with the slaves was at least partly assumed,

and in his very remarkable conversation with Godkin and Norton, after the war, the same attitude is even more obvious. "The North has nothing to do with the negroes. I have no more concern for them than I have for the Hottentots. They are God's poor; they always have been and always will be so everywhere. They are not of our race. They will find their place. They must take their level." [82]

Schurz remarks, with some justice, that in his conduct of diplomacy Seward would never take the full advantage that the slavery question afforded him.[83] He was careful to instruct our representatives at foreign courts not to insist too strongly on the moral issue at the bottom of the struggle and to point out that the Government was not endeavoring so much to destroy slavery as to maintain the Union.

It is in this last connection that Seward's abundant and energetic patriotism is at all times manifest. The unity, the solidarity of the American people, in the light of their historic past and their incomparable future, was such an intense reality to him that he would not allow for an instant that it could be shattered, that there was any danger of its being shattered. This overconfidence may at times have made him blind to the perils of the situation, but beyond doubt it was a splendid, animating force to him and to others.

It was this love of the Union which, during his

senatorship, made him resist what he felt to be the fatal encroachments of the slave power, while at the same time he studied every legitimate means of compromise and harmony.

It was the love of the Union and not entirely personal motives, which made him disappointed when the nomination for the Presidency went to an insignificant Illinois lawyer instead of to himself.

It was the love of the Union which led him to accept the position of Secretary under the said lawyer, with the feeling that as the real head of the Cabinet and of the Government he could accomplish almost as much as in the presidential chair. And it was in the same spirit of patriotism that he fought desperately against what he believed the disastrous plan of relieving Sumter, keeping up a semi-diplomatic intercourse with the Confederate commissioners and deceiving them, in fact, if not in intention, because he had first deceived himself.

It was still the love of the Union, as well as the love of personal leadership, which prompted the Secretary to submit to his chief those extraordinary "Thoughts for the President's Consideration," which show how the wisest of men may be misled by a too high estimate of his own importance.[84] I know how to run the Government, I can run it, and I will run it — if you wish me to, said this document in effect. The President's mild

reply that he did not wish it began the gradual adjustment of relations between the two. But Seward's love of the Union was as present as ever in his loyal acceptance of the supremacy of the natural ruler whom destiny had set over him.

The growth of confidence and affection between Lincoln and Seward is delightful to study. To be sure, it was not in Seward's nature to recognize a superior, and to the end he nursed the illusion of the importance of his influence, an illusion which Lincoln appreciated — and gently encouraged. Also, there is infinite shrewd insight in Welles's remark that if Lincoln had written one of Seward's ill-judged letters, "he would not have hesitated a moment to retrace his steps and correct it; but that is the difference between Abraham Lincoln and William H. Seward." [35] We must not ask too much of humanity.

Yet Welles records elsewhere Seward's admirable confession, after his views as to Sumter had been rejected, that "old as he was, he had learned a lesson from this affair, and that was, he had better attend to his own business and confine his labors to his own department." [36] He did not learn the lesson. Who of us ever does? So long as the war lasted, he showed more or less disposition to advise about the affairs of others. But he did this, not as a meddlesome busybody, though Welles often thought so, but from an intense and passionate zeal for the triumph of the cause, just as a

similar zeal, mingled perchance with a little natural delight in the exercise of power, led to his apparently harsh treatment of the political prisoners who came within the jurisdiction of the State Department.

The same enthusiastic devotion to the Union that manifested itself in domestic affairs, showed in Seward's conduct of his special field of foreign relations. At first, indeed, it does not appear that the enthusiasm was always guided by discretion. The sense of power in controlling the intercourse of the country with all the great nations of the world produced a sort of intoxication which showed itself in words and deeds not wholly appropriate. The picture given by Russell at the very beginning of the war is as unfavorable as it is vivid: "A subtle, quick man, rejoicing in power, given to perorate, bursting with the importance of state mysteries and with the dignity of directing the foreign policy of the greatest country — as all Americans think — in the world." [87] Seward himself denied having uttered, even jocosely, the threat quoted by the Duke of Newcastle, that he would soon be Secretary of State and it would then be his duty to insult England. But no one can question the authenticity of Lord Lyon's, the English ambassador's, account of the scene at his table, when, finding that Seward "was getting more and more violent and noisy, and saying things which it would be more convenient for me

not to have heard, I took a natural opportunity, as host, to speak to some of the ladies in the room." [28]

But as time went on, this effervescence, after all rather superficial, quieted, and the Secretary applied his keen intellect and his vast industry more and more skillfully to the service of his country. His conduct of the Trent affair, involving the release of the commissioners sent by the Confederacy to England, who had been taken by Captain Wilkes, though perhaps rather on the level of the clever advocate than of the great statesman, was deft, patriotic, and eminently successful. And his letters and instructions to ministers abroad, while sometimes verbose and not always free from errors of judgment, were framed on broad and definite lines of policy and were unquestionably of very great value in preserving the friendships and averting the enmities which were both so closely connected with the preservation of the Union. There is much to justify Bigelow's remark that of all the departments of Government during the war, that of State was the only one "the conduct of which was never seriously assailed by Congress, by the press, or by the public." [29] And this was wholly the result of Seward's management.

Perhaps the two concrete achievements that best illustrate Seward's diplomatic success are the expulsion of the French from Mexico and the acquisition of Alaska. In regard to Mexico, how ad-

mirable, in a statesman accused of undue bluster, is the letter to Bigelow making clear the necessity of tact and conciliation while our own struggle lasted. "I regret that you think my course towards the French Government is too conciliatory and courteous. . . . We have compromised nothing, surrendered nothing, and I do not propose to surrender anything. But why should we gasconade about Mexico when we are in a struggle for our own life?" [40] Then, when the war was over, it was made perfectly evident to France that there was no place for her in Mexico any longer; yet this also was done with entire consideration and courtesy.

The Mexican affair was negative. The purchase of Alaska was a piece of constructive statesmanship, broadly conceived and energetically carried out. Who will say, after the developments of the last twenty years, that it was not as felicitous as it was enterprising?

Also, the Alaskan purchase, important as it was, was only a detail in Seward's conception of the needs, the possibilities, and the future development of America. From his earliest activity in politics he looked forward, far forward, and refused to be limited by the petty effort of the passing hour. It was this sense of the vast meaning of American democracy that made him utterly incredulous of secession as a practical issue and forever insistent on the mighty, cumulative march of

progress. Canada must be ours. Mexico must be ours. In thirty years, he said, Mexico City will be the capital of the United States.[41] Railroads? Of course we must have railroads! Canals? Of course we must have canals! Commerce? Of course we must have commerce! Every day we must be busy thinking and contriving to do our part toward the vast consummation which the Creator has planned for these great, growing, independent States.

So, as he was a cheerful person to have in the house, he was also a cheerful person to have in the country. When others were downcast and despairing, he was hopeful, and while no doubt such confidence might tend to delusion and deception and undeception, there were plenty to look at the dark side and provide for it without him. He did not think the war would come, he did not think it would last, he was sure it could have but one result if it did last, and he was inclined to believe that it was a natural stage of development which might not impossibly have beneficial consequences.

Nor was his optimism wholly of the comfortable sort which has no anxiety about the misfortunes of others, but is doubly solicitous about its own. When Bigelow warned him, early in the war, of the danger of assassination, which was so near being fatal to him at the time when it annihilated Lincoln, his buoyant answer was, "Assassination is not an American practice or habit, and one so vicious and so desperate cannot be engrafted into

our political system. This conviction of mine has steadily gained strength since the Civil War began. Every day's experience confirms it." [42]

Also, the cheerfulness was not a mere matter of temperament, not merely the smooth and quiet utterance of a spirit always tranquil and content. One most remarkable passage, written to his daughter, in August, 1862, after McClellan's misfortunes, shows him deeply oppressed by the burden of others' depression and complaint: "My table groans, and my heart sinks, under the weight of complaints that I can put to no practicable use. If I should let a shade of this popular despondency fall upon a despatch, or even rest upon my own countenance, there would be black despair throughout the whole country." [43] Perhaps the illumination of the whole country did not so absolutely depend upon the light of his countenance as he supposed, but much of it did. In any case, so believing, the effort he made was admirably and nobly patriotic, and the ringing, resounding assurance that echoes through all his foreign correspondence was unquestionably of the very highest value to his cause.

It was not only in ardent patriotic activity that Seward differed from the common type of politician to which the first part of our study might seem to assimilate him. In financial matters he was absolutely honest. This may not have been true of all his associates and supporters. With

his easy-going light-heartedness, he accepted the political methods common in his day, especially among men like Weed, and regarded the lobbyist and the office-seeker with far too much good-nature. But he boasted, and justly boasted, that so far from making anything out of politics himself, directly or indirectly, he had always spent well beyond his official salary.

Nor was this made easy by any unlimited supply of private means. On the contrary, he was often in financial trouble, and he neither liked nor understood the shrewd frugal management which is so helpful to the maintenance of honesty in high places. On one occasion, in the height of his career, he writes: "All excesses leave a train of penances. Those Rathbone notes fall due about this time. I am ashamed to confess that as to one of them I don't know when or where, any more than I can tell how, it is to be paid." [44] A statesman in such a position as that is driving very near to a dangerous abyss. Too many fall in. Seward did not. And as Seward was no politician in money matters, so he was perfectly ready to stand up against popular enthusiasm and to sacrifice personal advantage, when duty or humanity seemed to demand it. The most striking instance of this in his legal practice is his defense of the negro murderer, Freeman, when the whole community was howling for his punishment. Seward took the case, in defiance of public opinion, and

demonstrated the wretch's irresponsibility so completely that the jury was obliged to acquit him.

In public life, also, Seward did not hesitate a moment to support an unpopular cause. When the Catholics were a comparatively small minority and were in disfavor, he, as Governor of New York, recommended "The establishment of schools in which they may be instructed by teachers speaking the same language and professing the same faith." [45] He was a consistent and energetic advocate of unlimited immigration, and his readiness to help the ignorant and the oppressed, even when such action seemed contrary to the party outcries of the hour, was sufficiently marked to elicit from Charles Francis Adams, in his enthusiastic eulogy, the declaration, "Very few public men in our history can be cited who have shown so much indifference, in running directly counter to the popular passions when highly excited, as he did." [46]

Enemies of Seward, and some of his warm friends, have pointed out that in all these instances of apparent sacrifice there was, or might have been, some clever perception of future political advantage. But it is difficult to find any such selfish motive in the broad and patriotic attitude which he adopted after his loss of the presidential nomination in 1860. There was no sulking, no repining, just a steady resolve to make the best of it and, above all, to go on serving the country. Even finer is the complete abandonment, from

that time, of the ambition for the Presidency. Other supporters of Lincoln hoped and schemed to succeed him. Seward was the loyal, earnest Secretary of State and that only, or, if he aspired to be more, it was that he might make the Lincoln Government more efficient and more successful.

III

It is by this time very evident that Seward was a complex personage. Mr. Rhodes confesses himself puzzled by some of these apparent inconsistencies. He says of one case, "Whether the course of Seward was dictated by a noble independence of party trammels, or whether he was trimming to catch the moderate element among the Republicans and Democrats at the North, it seems impossible to decide." [47] Mr. Bancroft, in his admirable biography, one of the very best dealing with the Civil War, is driven to the conception of two distinct Sewards, living *à la* Jekyll and Hyde, in the same body, one the admirer and imitator of such an ideal statesman as John Quincy Adams, the other the close associate and, if not the tool, at least the confederate of astute politicians like Thurlow Weed.[48]

There is, I think, a theory which, although we should not emphasize it too much, will help us to reconcile all these inconsistencies. Let us admit at once that Seward's temperament was not that

of a great statesman. His career requires too much apology. When you have explained away half of him, what is left may have distinct claims to greatness. But put him beside a really big man, with square shoulders, a square head, and a square heart, and he shrivels. Why, his face is incompatible with greatness. All the portraits I have seen of him, but one, give an impression of wizened inadequacy. And even that one suggests a soul not fitted for the highest executive success.

No, Seward's temperament was essentially that of an artist, and, without forcing the argument too far, this will explain for us a great many of the secrets of his brilliant and complicated career. It is curious how much that is puzzling slips into its true place when viewed in this light, curious how often Seward himself directly or indirectly indicates this clue to the vagaries of his thought. It was the artist in him that quivered at the coming of crocuses and tulips and longed to spend hours watching the roses in luxuriant bloom.[49] It was the artist, above all, that summed up his own instincts in the following comment: "Few people are capable of an artistic conception about anything. Of the multitude whose daily occupation is with our dinner, how few ever attain to a proper notion of how to cook it." [50] To prepare the great concoction of American history according to an artistic recipe, and to be head *chef* in the process, that was the instinctive longing of William H.

Seward. And this is as true of his old age in Reconstruction days as it was of his buoyant youth, when he first sported with the passions of anti-masonry.

He was an artist in words. He was not a great man of letters and never could have been. He was too diffuse; in fact, often thought more about the words than about the idea they carried with them. But from his college days, when he wrote a thesis entitled, "Virtue is the best of all the Vices," he had the real literary man's love for the jingle and clatter and sparkle and resonance of those dainty and dangerous instruments which were given us to conceal our thoughts. All his speeches are entertaining reading, and that is a great deal to say of a dead speech. After going through fifteen volumes of Sumner's orations, till one hates the name of oratory, one can take up any speech of Seward's and be really diverted. There is plenty of verbiage, plenty of platitude. But he knows it just as well as you do, and does not in the least care; in fact, serves it out on purpose. And you enjoy cunning periods like the following, because you feel how exceedingly he enjoys them: "If I fall here, let no kinsman or friend remove my dust to a more hospitable grave. Let it be buried under the pavements of the Avenue, and let the chariot wheels of those who have destroyed the liberties of my country rattle over my bones until a more heroic and worthy

generation shall recall that country to life, liberty, and independence." [51] Now, is n't that fun?

He was an artist in political management and this explains many things he did and many things he did not do. It has been denied as well as asserted that he called politics "a harmless game for power," but much in his attitude suggests the phrase. While he would have abhorred the morals, whether political or general, of Talleyrand and Metternich, there are indications that he admired their tact, their patience, their self-control, and their indifference. It was the artist who remarked naïvely, "I am disgusted with politics, yet how long will I remain so?" [52] It was the artist who is said to have modeled the little incident about Benjamin and the cigar, above referred to, on a similar passage between Van Buren and Clay. It was the artist who recounted, as vividly as a scene in a comedy, the conversation between himself, Weed, and Whittlesey, which resulted in Seward's nomination for Governor. It was the artist, finally, who luxuriated in Sterne, the most thoroughly artificial of literary men, and could cite him as follows: "Sterne is the only philosopher who resolves for me what I feel to be my art of living. 'We get forward in the world,' says he, 'not so much by doing services as by receiving them.'" [53] He might have found even more application in another bit of Shandyism, when Sterne shows his compassionate tenderness by feeding the

starved ass, but at the same time murmurs, "At this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me, that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit of seeing how an *ass* would eat a macaroon — than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act." All his life Seward felt that devouring curiosity to see how the constituent ass would munch the political macaroon.

This sense of detachment, of watching the game, of amusement at the antics of the puppets and their insignificance, including his own, is ever present and most characteristic. Mr. Bancroft justly points out that Seward on himself is always delightful. It is for this reason, because he surveyed himself as one among the other asses and laughed at his own contortions with that macaroon. He is annoyed with himself, ashamed of himself, surprised at himself, but as if he were somebody else. He told Bigelow that "He had been astonished to find how much he had done since he had been in public life and how well some things had been done which he had entirely forgotten." [54] It was the same detachment which led him to smile at the outrageous treatment of Motley, in 1867, and to imply calmly to Bigelow that he had to sacrifice Motley to save himself.[55]

This detached, remote attitude is that of the humorist, and Seward was a humorist all his life. He himself denied that Lincoln was and in a sense justly. Lincoln, he said, was a grave and serious

man who told his stories only to make a point.[56] He might have said, further, that to the Lincoln of the war, as to the Shakespeare of the tragic period, comedy was merely a relief in the terrible tragedy of life. To Seward there was no tragedy of life. The most strenuous effort, the most ardent hope, were all a part of the game, and even suffering was insignificant compared with eternity. Therefore, in his speech and in his thought, there was always the light and dainty play of humorous fancy, as when he ends a letter to Weed, summing up all his semi-serious woes and difficulties, "With love to Harriet, I am ever your unfortunate friend who has faith in everybody and enjoys the confidence of nobody." [57]

Also, he was capable of keen wit. To a lady who was begging for military information he said, "Madam, if I did not know, I would tell you."[58] When Piatt had assisted him to pass the guard at the War Department — Stanton's War Department — by making him known to the sentinel, and in turn himself asked to be passed through the same strait gate, in the name of common politeness, Seward remarked, "Young man, the politeness of this Department is not common."[59]

With the humor and the detachment went also the vanity of at least a certain type of artist. It need hardly be said that this is not the highest type. Seward did not represent the highest type. The defect obviously springs from not surveying

one's self with quite the same complete detachment as one bestows upon the rest of the world. Whatever the cause, a certain vanity, at times vexatious, is undeniable in Seward. "He had a canine appetite for praise," says Bigelow,[60] quoting Jefferson on Lafayette. And the astute Lord Lyons comments patronizingly: "He has, besides, so much more vanity, personal and national, than tact, that he seldom makes a favorable impression at first. When one comes really to know him, one is surprised to find much to esteem and even to like in him." [61]

This vanity showed both in candid statement of the Secretary's indisputable merits and in a certain amount of delusion as to merits and abilities which he did not possess. It accounts for his being "intoxicated with power," as a good observer expresses it, for his long-cherished belief that he could run and was running the whole Government of Lincoln, for many remarks and observations almost equal to the following: "Only the soothing words which I have spoken have saved us and carried us along so far." [62] It finds, perhaps, its most delightful manifestation in the amplified reminiscence of a well-known saying of Cæsar, "I always held on to my country home at Auburn, because, come what might, there I could always be sure of ranking with the first. I would not live in New York City because there one becomes cheap. You are lost in the crowd. By keeping

outside of the city I was always a lion in the city. I patronized instead of being patronized." [63]

As this quotation shows, such vanity as Seward's — and the same is true of the far greater vanity of Cicero — is not at all incompatible with keen self-analysis. Indeed, the two naturally occur together. It is precisely because one is so sensible of one's own defects that one does not wish others to see them. Such vanity is even consonant with a fine humility. Above all, it often accompanies a quite adorable simplicity and candor, as suggested by the remark of one of Meilhac and Halévy's characters, who was accused of coquetry because he looked in the glass. "Oh, no, it is n't coquetry at all. It is just simply that it gives me great pleasure to look at myself."

Finally, the most attractive and most serviceable element of the artist in Seward was the imaginative outlook, which I have indicated earlier in this study. Others about him were more or less opportunist, absorbed in the immediate political necessity of the hour. From his earliest manhood he looked far ahead into the immense regions of American possibility and guided his course steadily by what he saw there. He was not a profound thinker in any line. In religion he moved always in the vague limbo in which many of us nowadays pass our spiritual lives. In philosophy and art he seldom went beyond conventionalities. His force in this line is well shown by Mr. Bancroft's excel-

lent observation that "he had a philosophical theory for everything he wished to believe." [64] But he had the seer's enthusiasm and the seer's hope. The present, the result actually achieved, however great, was never enough for him. A new purpose, a new dream, a new ideal, perpetually spurred him onward; and in this nervous restlessness he was thoroughly American and of immense service to America. You could not fatigue him. You could not disgust him. Hear with what a clamorous appeal he stirs the sloth of his fellows in the dead atmosphere of routine legislation: "I see rising before me hundreds of thousands, millions, even tens of millions, of my countrymen, receiving their fortunes and fates, as they are being shaped by the action of the Congress of the United States, in this hour of languor, at the close of a weary day, near the end of a protracted and tedious session." [65] One phrase sums up as well as any this splendid, energetic, triumphant, imaginative optimism, which is perhaps Seward's greatest merit and surest claim to the affection of posterity. "The improvability of our race is without limit." [66] When the immediate prospect looks black and hopeless, it is well to stimulate our courage with that watchword, which one statesman at least believed in, "The improvability of our race is without limit."

While not insisting too strongly, I believe that this explanation of the artist's temperament is the

best clue to all the spiritual problems affecting Seward. The point is interesting because it differentiates him from almost all of his political contemporaries, who were workers, practical men, too busy with the battle going on about them to get out of it and survey it as a spectacle merely.

However we view him, he was a many-sided, many-colored, many-featured, most fascinating spirit, whom I part from with the greatest regret. Yet I confess that, after all, what comes closest to me in regard to him is Lincoln, rolling over in his berth and murmuring sleepily, "Seward, you go out and repeat some of your poetry to the people."

VIII

CHARLES SUMNER

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Boston, January 6, 1811.
Admitted to Boston Latin School, August, 1821.
Graduated, Harvard, 1830.
Entered Law School, 1831.
Admitted to bar, 1834.
Traveled in Europe, 1837–1840.
Law and general public activity, 1840–51.
First public speech, July 4, 1845.
Entered Senate, 1851.
Assaulted by Brooks, May 22, 1856.
Recovering, 1856–60.
Active in Senate, 1860–74.
Married Mrs. Hooper, October 17, 1866.
Parted from wife, June, 1867.
Removed from chairmanship of Foreign Affairs Committee, 1871.
Died, March 11, 1874.

VIII

CHARLES SUMNER

I

SUMNER had a magnificent tongue and one idea, the abolition of slavery. If it be suggested that this is limiting his stock of ideas unduly, it may be answered that even so he had one more than a good many of us. He himself resented such limitation with spirit: "There is sometimes a warning against men of one idea, with a finger-point at myself. Here I meet my accusers face to face. What duty have I failed to perform? Let it be specified." [1] There is, perhaps, a slight confusion in this passage, not unnatural in dealing with an unfamiliar subject.

Sumner's admirers also protest strongly that he had a wealth of ideas. It is true that even politically speaking some subjects besides slavery are dealt with in the fifteen-volumed collection of his works. He spoke at length on the peace of the world, also more specifically on questions of foreign policy, on copyright and the tariff on books, on financial questions after the war. And he accumulated and poured forth a mass of historical erudition on the purchase of Alaska.

If enormous contact with print makes a man of

ideas, few have been better furnished than Sumner. He read almost from his cradle, with zeal and industry and delight. In college he did not always study, but he read. In preparing for his law career, he read twice as much law as any one else and four times as much that was not law. During his years abroad, in the thirties, he read all authors in all languages. When he returned and practiced law, — rather unsuccessfully, — he still read. He objected to being in the Senate because it interfered with his reading, yet he probably read more than any other five Senators. When he was recovering from the fierce Southern bludgeon of Brooks, he wrote to Longfellow (March, 1859), in most characteristic words: "Lying on my back, books have been my great solace. I have read furiously — like the old Bishop of Avranches, *flos episcoporum;* or Felton; or the Abbé Morellet, in the Bastille; or Scaliger." [2] His idea of heaven was that of Gray, reading, reading, reading.

In this immense faculty of ocular absorption and also of retaining what was absorbed, he suggests Macaulay, and it is pretty to see how all Sumner speaks in the conversation with A. B. Johnson about the great English historian.[3] Sumner had known Macaulay well and with his own noble candor recognizes the Englishman's huge capacity of acquisition. At the same time, you cannot fail to be impressed with the fact that one Sumner had read a little something too.

And, like Macaulay's, Sumner's information was singularly complete in unexpected regions. When one of Lady Holland's guests introduced the subject of dolls, Macaulay told all there was to know about them from the Romans down, till the hostess ordered him to change the subject. So Sumner could discourse exhaustively on old lace, or pottery, or engravings, was equally at home with jewels, or trees, or the breeding of horned cattle.

Nevertheless, some persons consider that even Macaulay had more gift at expressing ideas than at originating them. And this was certainly true of Sumner. We need not accept in full the harsh dictum of Carlyle, who detested Sumner's politics: "The most completely nothin' of a mon that ever crossed my threshold, — naught whatsoever in him or of him but wind and vanity." [4] Nor even the hardly more amiable one of Lord Morley, in his "Life of Gladstone," that Sumner was "too often the slave of words when he thought he was their master." [5] A similar personal antipathy is obvious in the judgment of the shrewd and critical Godkin, written in 1867: "Did you see poor Sumner's last 'bill and resolutions'? What a pitiable spectacle! Was there *ever* anything in the man, and if so, what has become of it? I felt so grateful to Fessenden, ungentlemanly though he was, for sticking his pin into the bladder." [6] But it must be admitted by even the impartial observer that Sumner's thought and reflection were wholly out of

proportion to his immense reading, swamped by it, perhaps.

Mr. Storey, in his admirably sympathetic biography, says that the Senator "treated his mind as a reservoir and into it steadily pumped learning of every kind."[7] It is interesting to note that Sumner himself, in one of those moments of self-illumination which come to every man, no matter how blind he may be to his own demerits, used the same figure, remarking to Colonel Higginson, "These people forget that I am a cistern, not a fountain, and require time to fill up."[8] A cistern he was, without doubt, though one of most extraordinary capacity.

There are, however, plenty of men who are not thinkers, but more than make up for the defect by richness of emotion and sensibility. If you probe Sumner beneath the faculty of speech, you find him quite as much lacking in this respect as in intellectual power. Longfellow, who judged him with both the insight and the discretion of exquisite friendship, speaks of him as "a *colossus* holding his burning heart in his hand, to light up the sea of life."[9] But if he did illuminate that treacherous sea, it was rather by the white incandescence of moral purpose. I cannot find any evidence that his heart ever burned. His father is described as a man of singular self-possession, his mother as a woman of equable, even imperturbable, temper. Charles never belied his origin.

Take art. He pursued art, in all its forms, — poetry, painting, music, — all his life, with insatiable curiosity. He collected rare books, engravings, bric-à-brac, with untiring zeal. He collected these things intelligently and systematically. He could talk of them by the hour and write of them by the yard. I find no indication that he was ever wrapt or transported by them. His devoted friend, W. W. Story, says, "The higher flights of the imagination, or the rapid ranges of fancy, were above him," [10] and elsewhere, "his judgment as to a work of art was poor; his sense of art very limited, though he ever strove to cultivate his taste and feeling for it." [11]

Take nature. There is hardly a sign in all his vast printed writing that natural beauty existed, unless in a quotation for ornamental purposes. He never lived in the country, never wanted to. He does, indeed, twice repeat the phrase, "Man's season is over; but God's is come." [12] It is a good phrase. But man's season was quite enough for him.

If a heart burns with anything, it burns with love. Did Sumner's? If so, there is no record of it. At fifty-five he married a young widow; but the heart-burning came afterward. In his youth girls apparently were null to him. He did not even avoid them. But he would turn from any girl at any moment to any man who could assuage his interrogatory mania. In 1859, when he was nearly

fifty, he and Mr. Bemis discussed "love, including some of Sumner's experiences." [13] But this seems rather shadowy.

In his talk with women he had at times a peculiar pedantry which is pleasant to the observer, but must have been overpowering to the recipient. On his way to school, at a tender age, he used often to encounter a dainty slip of virginity and his casual greeting was, "*Macte virtute*," grow in grace.[14] When he was an elderly Senator in Washington, a young lady, just entering society, eagerly confided to him that she did love to see lions breaking the ice. Sumner remarked, after a moment's pause, "Miss ——, in the country where lions live there is no ice."[15] His intervening triumphant career does not lack similar conversational blossoms.

Yet women sought him and delighted in him, doubtless because of the well-known charm of the unattainable. W. W. Story tells of repeated bets with the most fascinating women that they could not long engage Sumner's attention. They accepted, and sparkled, and shone, quite fruitlessly. Like the heroes of Ossian, they went forth to the war, but they always fell.[16]

And this is the best. Sumner himself told how one day he wrote a love letter for a client and so outdid the client's own experience that he was actually moved to tears. What an enviable and golden — or tinsel — mastery of words![17]

By painful emotions he was as little affected as by agreeable. Fear he apparently did not know. He did not fear obloquy. He did not fear pain. He did not fear death. Long before he was attacked in the Senate, he was furiously threatened. But he refused all precaution and all protection. After he had been attacked, when the danger was renewed, he was equally indifferent to it. And his disregard of death was not the mere buoyant ignorance of perfect health; for it persisted through a tedious illness and even expressed itself in a certain reluctance to recovery.

Nor was the fear of death subdued by any positive or inspiring religious enthusiasm. In this field as elsewhere Sumner had little emotional experience and little speculative theory to induce it. Grant's harsh gibe, when told that Sumner had no faith in the Bible, "No, he did n't write it," [18] may be neglected — though appreciated. The Senator cherished a general, wholesome, optimistic belief that all would be well, and his strong moral sense sometimes found utterance in impressive religious phraseology, as when he rebuked the attitude of Gladstone and other English supporters of the South by saying that they "were forgetting God who will not be forgotten." [19] But he himself wrote in youth, "I am without religious feeling." [20]

It is useless to attempt to embroider such a bare, tremendous declaration as that, and I know

no reason to suppose that he would have modified it later.

Even in lines connected with his own special, glorious achievement, we find no evidence of emotional susceptibility. Warrington, a not unfriendly critic, wrote: "Mr. Sumner was one who did not care for or deal with *man*, but with *men;* whose studies were in the direction of the rights of races, not attracted toward the misfortunes of individuals." [21] This does not mean that he was in any way selfish, or harsh, or inconsiderate. He was the direct contrary of all these bad things. But he was not prompted by any quick sympathy for the feelings of others. It was said that his advocacy of the negro absorbed him so completely that he had no concern for white misery, even among his own constituents. Bradbury, of Maine, inquired of a poor woman whose claim had been rejected by the Senate, why she did not ask her own Senator to support her. "Oh, sir, I did, but really, sir, Mr. Sumner takes no interest in claims unless they be from black people." [22] And the caustic Welles has his merciless criticism, even in regard to black people: "He would not only free the slaves, but elevate them above their former masters, yet, with all his studied philanthropy and love for the negroes in the abstract, is unwilling to fellowship with them, though he thinks he is. It is, however, ideal, book philanthropy." [23]

II

It has been urged by many that Sumner had, at any rate, one idea, besides the abolition of slavery, and that idea was, Charles Sumner. If it be meant by this that he was in any way selfish or self-seeking, that he was absorbed in his own advantage or advancement, that he was ready to engross to himself honors or privileges or profits that should have belonged to others, the view is utterly false. But it is true that to him Charles Sumner occupied a rather prominent position in the universe. This was not merely a superficial vanity, an aggressive assertion of his own achievements, such as diverts us in Seward and in Cicero, and such as is often compatible with and indeed prompted by a keen self-distrust. In Sumner's case it was a placid, complacent satisfaction, a solid, foursquare assurance that the world needed him, unshaken by doubt and undisturbed by diffidence. The world did need him, but perhaps not quite so sorely as he thought.

It is difficult to find any break in this self-confidence. The vast extent of Sumner's speeches and correspondence would seem to open a wide door into his inner life. I have examined these writings with a curious eye for any intimation of self-distrust or even of self-criticism. I have searched in vain. He does, indeed, accompany presentation copies of his works with perfunctory apology.

When he is elected to the Senate, he accepts with no enthusiasm; but his hesitation is not from doubt of his ability, but from unwillingness to relinquish other pursuits. On one occasion only, in the whole course of his life, do I find him acknowledging a "sense of weakness, inferiority, and incompetency." [24] And where was this? In the presence of Niagara Falls.

One need not go to Sumner's enemies for evidence of his enveloping self-confidence and self-absorption. Did not Longfellow, who loved him with his own peculiar tenderness, write, with a sigh, "What confidence Sumner has in Sumner. I would not trust H. W. L. to that amount, nor would you G. W. G." [25] Senator Hoar, one of his predecessor's warmest defenders, admits that "it sometimes seemed as if Sumner thought the Rebellion itself was put down by speeches in the Senate, and that the war was an unfortunate and most annoying, though trifling disturbance, as if a fire-engine had passed by." [26] While Bigelow, less friendly, perhaps, but no enemy, draws a striking picture of later years: "His illness has not improved his manners, but rather brought out his worst points. He is more than ever the centre of the system in which he lives. He did not ask a question which indicated the least interest in any mortal or thing but himself." [27]

Mr. Storey, admitting the truth of these charges as to the years after the war, thinks that the long

struggle had made Sumner "egotistical and dogmatic," but that he was "originally modest and not self-confident." [28] The point is a very curious one; but such investigation as I have been able to give does not appear to me to establish it. The self-confidence and self-absorption of early days were naturally different from the same qualities later. But the substance was the same. It was substance, not shadow, and therefore must have been the same. The pedantry of youth developed gradually into the dogmatism of age. And what is pedantry ever but the excessive predominance of self?

In Sumner's speeches the pedantry is obvious everywhere and nobody denies it. It would be useless to accumulate instances. Let one little touch show how subtly it permeates even minor matters. "Three men once governed the mighty Roman world. Three facts govern the present case with the power of a triumvirate." [29] Fancy lugging in the commonplace of history after this fashion! To take a more elaborate example: in one of his last orations, that on the Pilgrim Forefathers, the speaker introduces a full-page list of seventeenth-century crowned heads in Europe, twenty-seven of them, with their titles enumerated at length, and why? Because all these worthies had their portraits painted and the Pilgrims had not.[30] It may, indeed, be argued, justly, that a certain amount of this sort of thing belonged to all the

eloquence of that day, and that now we have got rid of the drapery for bare facts, just as we have got rid of the hoopskirts that went with it. Seward's speeches have their rhetoric. Toombs's have. Stephens's have. But Sumner's tone is different from theirs.

The pedantry is not in his speeches alone. It followed him in all his official doings, with a certain lack of adaptability to situations, a gift for saying the wrong word, an aptitude for doing things, right in themselves, in a way that was not happy. Take the inimitable scene, described by General Butterfield, in which Lincoln foils the Senator's determination to outstay the general.[31] Take the hopeless answer to Lincoln's genial proposition to compare heights by standing back to back, that it was better to present a united front to the enemy than united backs, with Lincoln's precious comment, "I have never had much to do with Bishops where I live; but do you know, Sumner is my idea of a Bishop." [32] Take the formal meeting after Lincoln's death, when Stanton was reading a carefully prepared proclamation and was interrupted in the middle by Sumner's portentous "Stop!" Stanton suggested deferring criticism till he had finished. "Stop!" repeated Sumner. Again Stanton begged for silence, and was again finally blocked by that terrific "Stop!" [33] How he must have loved the Senator at that moment! One hardly wonders

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that as a practicing lawyer Sumner did not wholly succeed.

The same pernicious habit appeared with the most intimate friends. Even of Sumner one can hardly credit the story that, at fifteen years old, when his mother reproved him for being late to breakfast, he quietly remonstrated, "Call me Mr. Sumner, mother, if you please." [34] But the whole man — the big voice, the six feet odd of luxuriant platform manner — rushes before you in the reply to Colonel Higginson's mildly expressed doubt as to a certain decision of the Supreme Court, "I suppose I know more about judges than any man in America," [35] and again in Lowell's stinging comment: "'I advise you to listen to this,' Sumner used to say, when he was talking about himself (as he commonly was): 'this is history.'" [36]

In fact, we have Sumner's own, hardly impeachable evidence, that he posed even when he was alone. "He once told me," says Noah Brooks, "that he never allowed himself, even in the privacy of his own chamber, to fall into a position which he would not take in his chair in the Senate." [37] This, I think, it would be hard to beat, in all the records of history.

Sumner's pedantry is associated by almost every one with a total lack of humor. Nobody totally lacks humor. Sumner said a number of witty things, and appreciated some, and had, doubtless, his own peculiar sense of the comic. But this sense

was rather limited, and never, oh, never, did Charles Sumner appear to himself a humorous object, in any possible light. Mr. Storey asserts, with entire justice, that this lack of feeling for the humorous was intimately connected with Sumner's inability to take another person's point of view. But I think, in consideration of some elements in the analysis we have been making, we may carry the conclusion a little further, and say that it was Sumner's lack of intense feelings of his own that made him incapable of entering into the feelings of others.

III

It would seem, from the preceding investigation, that Sumner was not likely to be personally popular. This deduction is far from the fact. He had, of course, many detractors and some bitter enemies; but at all periods of life he had most affectionate friends, besides an immense circle who regarded him with a kindness almost approaching tenderness. After his death, even among those who could not consider him a great genius, there were hundreds who would have said with Norton: "I have a very kindly feeling to his memory; I should like to have more respect for it." [88]

The love of Longfellow is in itself enough to accredit any man, and there were few whom Longfellow cherished with the peculiar tenderness he gave to Sumner. How enthusiastic, and at the

same time how discriminating in its enthusiasm, is the praise with which the poet sent his friend across the water to another friend: "He is a very lovely character, as you will find — full of talent; with a most keen enjoyment of life; simple, energetic, hearty, good; with a great deal of poetry and no nonsense about him." [89]

The testimony of many others of the wise and just is equally decided: Lieber, W. W. Story, Motley, Pierce, and, in a later generation, Mr. Moorfield Storey and Mr. Lodge. All these men, and hosts of others who knew Sumner intimately, regarded him with deep and lasting affection.

But what is more notable still is that he seems to have made himself generally acceptable in a far wider sphere. The story of his European travels, as told in his own letters and in those of others, is one of the most remarkable instances of social success that are recorded anywhere. A young man, with nothing but his personal merits to support him, he went to England, to France, to Germany, to Italy, and mingled in the very best society that Europe at that time afforded. Great lords honored him, great ladies invited him, great wits discoursed with him. Earls and duchesses established a correspondence that lasted a lifetime, and addressed this American democrat as "My dearest friend." He talks familiarly with Peel, with Russell, with Gladstone, with Louis Philippe and Cavour. The caustic Rogers confides in him, the

eccentric, overbearing Brougham praises his legal knowledge, and men and women both concur in a verdict similar to that of Mrs. Grote: "I may safely affirm that no visitor from the United States ever received more flattering attention than Mr. Sumner from both English and Scottish houses." [40]

There is no disputing this immense social success of Sumner, certainly much more marked abroad, but in the same line as what he obtained at home, especially in early life. While it may not oblige us to modify any of the observations we have hitherto made on his character, it does require that they should be supplemented by others somewhat different. To be sure, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Americans were beginning to be a fashion in England. Cooper and Irving were well received, Ticknor quite as enthusiastically as Sumner. Yet this alone will not answer our question, nor will the fretful comment of the acrimonious Carlyle, "Oh, yes; Mr. Sumner was a vera dull man, but he did not offend people, and he got on in society here." [41] Inoffensiveness is, no doubt, a master social key, and it did not hang in Carlyle's jingling bunch, but it will not alone suffice to unlock the doors of secretaries and prime ministers, of duchesses and earls, of great painters and poets. If we had no other clue than this, we should have to subside with the frankness of Abraham Hayward, and simply say we could not make it out.[42]

But there are other clues, plenty of them. In the first place Sumner commended himself by his interest in everything, his eternally vigilant, inexhaustible curiosity. He had not one atom of the toady, or even of the intentional flatterer about him, but there is no more effective flattery than ready and attentive listening, and Sumner, in his younger days, when he was not talking himself, is admitted to have been a listener of the first quality. He wanted to hear everything, to know everything. Perhaps his curiosity was not very discriminating, but it was enormous, with the vigor of healthy nerves and a mind not much preoccupied internally. If he entered a museum, he wanted the history of every specimen. If he visited a garden, he asked the name of every tree. If he passed a fish market, on a morning stroll, he inspected the herd of Neptune with as much inquisitiveness as if he had to deliver an oration on the value of Lenten nutriment. When he stays at an English country house, he finds everybody riding to hounds, therefore he must. At home he had never been a sportsman, but he is here to see the habits of the English, and so he rides, perhaps not elegantly, but with an energy that is persistent and indomitable.[48]

A man may be curious, however, and be an intolerable bore. Apparently no one found Sumner so. Besides his curiosity, there was his singular simplicity. Whatever faults he had, lack of candor

was not one of them. He was absolutely genuine and sincere. Even from his foreign social triumph he brought back no affectation, no pseudo-aristocracy, no snobbishness. He may have tied his tie and carried his cane after the English fashion. But his heart remained thoroughly democratic and thoroughly American.

And Sumner had a further claim to the kindness of others. He was consistently kind and amiable himself. "His smile is very beautiful," wrote a lady who knew him well; "lighting up his usually stern face, and melting away all its coldness. I never saw a face before which was so changed by a smile." [44] Smiles of that description are wonderful friend-winners. All servants and dependents loved Sumner. Children loved him. "He is a man to whom all children come." Could there be more charming testimony to amiability of character than that? Animals loved him. All dogs in him recognized a friend.[45]

Sumner was perfectly ready to carry this same amiability into political life. The evidence is indisputable that, although he was involved in bitter controversy during all his public career, he rarely cherished anything like enmity, rancor, or personal grudge. In later years his attacks on Johnson and Grant seemed to have an element of personal irritation; but he himself would never have admitted this, holding that his zeal was wholly and solely for the public good. Through his

earlier battle with the South he was remarkably free from violence of temper or any partisan animosity. His whole tone toward Brooks, after the assault, was dignified and generous, not a forgiveness of the lips only, but a large appreciation of the working of circumstances to bring about a disaster in which his assailant was hardly more than an unconscious instrument. Writing to Miss Child of the cordial relations which at first obtained between him and his opponents, he says: "This experience would teach me, if I needed the lesson, to shun harsh and personal criticism of those from whom I differ." [46] And elsewhere he remarks of himself, with some complacency but much truth, "It is my nature to be more touched by the kindness of friends than by the malignity of enemies, and I know something of both." [47]

The curious, the extraordinary, thing is that it was this constitutional amiability, abetted, no doubt, by the lack of very profound feeling I have suggested above, which made Sumner one of the most irritating, exasperating of political opponents. Nothing that his enemies said could hurt him. Why, then, should anything he said hurt them? The most savage, the most virulent, use of words that an ample vocabulary could support was perfectly legitimate warfare. After all, they were but words, why should they wound? Thus, all through his career, he kept lashing men's backs with verbal scorpions, and then innocently won-

dering why they did not like it. His first notable speech was in favor of universal peace. It was delivered before an audience composed largely of military and naval men. He told them, in substance, that all war was a crime and that they represented a plague-spot in the community. His remarks were not very well received. His abuse of Douglas and of the slaveholders has too much in common with their abuse of him, and what more can be said? His later speeches, against Grant and his administration, are at least as tactlessly offensive as his earlier.

Yet, in saying all these things, he was calm, deliberate, apparently had no idea of the cruel wounds he was inflicting. Nothing illustrates this excess of misguided amiability better than Schurz's account of his begging Sumner not to abuse Grant in a proposed speech, of Sumner's abusing the President in the bitterest manner, and then remarking to Schurz afterwards, "You saw I was very moderate and temperate, and I hope you think I was wise not to be more severe." [48]

IV

The same curious mixture of kindness and uncompromising severity is to be seen in Sumner's friendships. These form one of the most attractive elements in his career. In nothing does he come nearer to real depth and tenderness of feeling than in his relations with Longfellow, with Felton,

with Dana, with Lieber. When he left for Washington to enter the Senate, he parted from his home associations with what seem to have been real tears. "Three times yesterday I wept like a child," he writes to Howe. "I could not help it: first in parting with Longfellow, next in parting with you, and lastly as I left my mother and sister." [49] How simple and winning is his expression of longing for Lieber: "I am more and more desolate and alone. I wish you and your dear wife lived here. You would allow me to enter your house and be at home; to recline on the sofa and play the part of a friend of the house. I lead a joyless life, with very little sympathy." [50] And Longfellow, with his fine gift for expressing affection, writes to Greene of Sumner's letters from Italy: "They are full of enthusiasm, and exhibit the softer and more poetical side of his character, — a side so little known or dreamed of by most people. He speaks of you often, and never without a caress." [51]

Yet if any of these cherished friends presumed to differ politically, Sumner said words that made friendly relations impossible, for the time at any rate. With Longfellow no man could quarrel, any more than with an archangel. But, although Dana and the Senator usually agreed, there was a period of decided estrangement.[52] Felton and Sumner had been most intimate in every way, but politics severed them, Sumner writing, characteristically,

"In anguish I mourn your altered regard for me; but more than my personal loss, I mourn the present unhappy condition of your mind and character." [53]

Lieber was long a devoted admirer and eulogist. He ventured criticism of some of his friend's utterances and was rebuked from the usual lofty plane. Thereupon he writes: "His conduct towards me in this matter has been outrageous and unmanly.... Sumner requires adulation and I am no flatterer." [54] Yet in later years their intercourse was renewed, and apparently became as active as it had ever been.

Sumner's marriage has peculiar interest in the light of the analysis we have thus far made of his character. A bachelor of nearly sixty woos a charming widow of thirty. They marry in the autumn — and part in the spring, as might have been expected. It is quite unnecessary to go into the various gossiping reasons for such a result. Human nature supplies enough of them.

Sumner entered into the match with the earnest, and unfortunately rather novel, preoccupation of making some one else happy.[55] He came out of it embittered and suffering sincere distress. "Long afterward he confided to a friend that 'thoughts of suicide haunted him, and then visions of withdrawing from the world, and burying himself in some lonely châlet amid Swiss mountains.'" [56] Probably this was not all literature. But I find

no evidence that he ever dreamed it possible he might have been at fault.

As for Mrs. Sumner, her case is covered by the remark of Bryant in regard to it that a wife "is not content with a husband who is too exclusively occupied with himself and his own greatness."[57] It is simply another instance of a woman's marrying a man because he is devoted to all mankind and leaving him because he is not devoted to her. Sumner, we can well understand, was, as a husband, always gentle, always considerate, always unselfish, and always exasperating. I imagine that, after six months of marriage, Mrs. Sumner came to have a certain tenderness for the memory of Preston Brooks.

As the theory of Sumner's egotism and self-absorption seems to be to some extent contradicted by the number and warmth of his friendships, so it seems also not quite compatible with his lack of distinct, definite, and personal ambition. Until he entered political life, at the age of forty, we find no indication of a haunting desire to do anything great. Though he lived in the company of authors, he expresses no wish to rival them. So in politics. He was elected Senator almost against his will, having never concerned himself in any way with the ordinary methods of political advancement. Although the senatorship probably meant more to him than he said or thought it did, he did not cherish it with any devouring eagerness.

It is asserted that at various times he entertained visions of the Presidency, but if so, it was because he thought that the office needed Charles Sumner more than Charles Sumner needed the office.

The same is true of that curious phenomenon, the publication of his complete works, which was begun under his own supervision and carried out after his death in fifteen solid volumes. Such minute care of one's own productions, the reprinting of every little letter bearing in any way on one's own political activity, would seem to prove an intense longing to perpetuate one's reputation with posterity. No doubt Sumner had something of this hope. But I think he was quite as much influenced by the feeling that here were precious thoughts and rich ideas that posterity could ill afford to be without. What a poignant pathos there is in realizing how very small a portion of those fifteen volumes may be read to-day with either profit or delight.

V

For the man was, after and above all, a gesture of the time-spirit, a voice uttering something that the world passionately needed to have uttered and that no one at that moment could utter so effectively as he. Others furnished the brains of the anti-slavery movement, others furnished the high-wrought imaginative enthusiasm, others furnished the hands and the physical, fighting vigor. Also,

we may doubt now whether the movement itself was in all ways a wise and practical one. But, in any case, it was a great moral protest, a great upheaval of progressive humanity against cruelty and wrong, and Sumner was the splendid political organ and instrument by which that protest found expression. He had the muscles, he had the nerves — or lack of nerves, he had the exhaustless energy and capacity for labor, he had the courage, he had the aspect, which goes such a long way, he had the abundant, redundant, resounding tumult and torrent of speech.

Thus his whole political career, his whole life, is identified with, is embodied in the great moral movement to free the negro and make him, politically at any rate, the equal of the white. And no more imposing monument could be designed for any man than success in such an effort. Sumner's anti-slavery struggle may be said to have begun in connection with the return of fugitive slaves from Massachusetts. From his election to the Senate, in 1851, it became the preoccupation of his life. In speech after speech he poured out his fierce antipathy to the great Southern institution and the slaveholders who supported it, until the wrath of Preston Brooks eliminated him from the contest for the time. As soon as it was possible for him to return, the denunciation was renewed. During the war he urged tirelessly that slaves should be emancipated. After the war he insisted

that their civil and political rights should be secured, that they should be given every privilege and opportunity that was open to the whites. In one of his later speeches he summed up, in a few words, all that he had sought and stood for: "Sir, my desire, the darling desire, if I may say so, of my soul, at this moment, is to close forever this question so that it shall never again intrude into these chambers — so that hereafter, in all our legislation, there shall be no such word as 'white' or 'black,' but that we shall speak only of citizens and of men." [58] Even with subjects apparently no way germane to the slavery question Sumner succeeded in discovering or developing some phase of his unceasing activity.

It is to be noted that in carrying out this great effort of statesmanship Sumner's very limitations were of advantage to him. The fact that he was not an idealist, not an enthusiast, made him practical in his methods. He wanted to see slavery abolished, but he had no sympathy with the extreme view that the Union should be sacrificed, if the Union and slavery seemed inseparable. They were separable and they must be separated. To destroy the Union would perpetuate slavery instead of abolishing it.

So, for his purposes, it was a gain that he should be uncompromising, that he should have a fine and unalterable belief that the conclusion of Charles Sumner was the conclusion of abstract

truth. Schurz writes that when some one asked Sumner whether he had ever looked at the other side of the slavery question, he answered: "'There is no other side.' . . . It was difficult for him to understand how any one could seriously consider the other side without being led astray by some moral obliquity." [59]

And this same clear-cut, unquestioning view of his duty made him splendidly honest, utterly inaccessible to all those suggestions of indirect method which are apt to commend themselves to a mind that is too subtle in considering plausible alternatives. Sumner's inborn rectitude made him seek the straight course only. His pride, his serene self-confidence, made him follow that course without wavering. There must be no spot, no taint, no stain upon such a person as Charles Sumner. And there was none.

Lastly, it must not be forgotten that he was ready to endure martyrdom for the cause that he believed in. He endured social martyrdom. Abolitionism was not popular in most of the best Boston families when Sumner took it up, and he was instantly cut off from some of the homes and firesides that had been dear to him. It is pretty to hear Senator Hoar, who had a somewhat similar experience, enlarge with mocking exaggeration on all that Sumner suffered in this way. [60]

He endured a physical martyrdom that was far more serious. To cure him of the effects of Brooks's

attack, Dr. Brown-Séquard put him through the torture of the moxa treatment, so horrible that shortly after that time it was abandoned, as too severe. Sumner bore it with a fortitude that was absolutely heroic, refusing to be spared one single pang that might enable him to return more quickly into the hottest of the fight.

Yet, as I have said earlier, in spite of his great achievement, and the energy that carried it through, I cannot find, after the most watchful consideration, that he had any more intensity of feeling in regard to slavery than in regard to anything else. He was solemn, he was serious, he was persistent. He had not the passionate, ideal enthusiasm of Garrison, of Parker, of John Brown. His blood occasionally boils — on paper. He is inflamed with zeal — on paper. In reality, he goes at his task with a sturdy, tremendous, physical determination and accomplishes it. Shelley could never have accomplished practically one hundredth part of what Sumner did. But how absurd it would be to apply to Sumner Shelley's words about himself, —

> "Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
> The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth."

So we return to our conclusion that Sumner was simply the vocal organ of one of the greatest moral movements of the world: "the man," says Senator Hoar, "who ever deemed himself sitting in a lofty

pulpit with a mighty sounding-board, with a whole widespread people for a congregation." [61] He believed that words could do anything and few men ever went further in demonstrating that words can. If he was only a voice, *vox et prætera nihil*, and I fear he was little more, it may at least be said that the voice uttered nothing that was base or mean, and that, even in its most wearisome iteration, it was always the high proclaimer of the moral law.

IX

SAMUEL BOWLES

CHRONOLOGY

Born in Springfield, Massachusetts, February 9, 1826.
Persuaded father to start the daily "Springfield Republican," 1844.
Health first gave out, 1844.
Married Mary S. D. Schermerhorn, September 6, 1848.
Dr. Holland became associate editor of the "Springfield Republican," 1850.
Severely ill, 1852.
Edited the "Boston Traveller," 1857.
Visited Europe for health, 1862.
Visited West, 1865, 1868, 1869.
Visited Europe, chiefly for health, 1870, 1871, 1874.
Died, January 16, 1878.

IX

SAMUEL BOWLES

I

It seems highly suitable to conclude a series of Union Portraits with a study of one of the great journalists, who played so important a part during the war and the years preceding and following. Several of these men have wider reputations than Samuel Bowles, but perhaps hardly any was more singly and intensely identified with his work. Weed and Greeley had an active personal interest in politics. Dana was a valuable public servant as well as an editor. Garrison was something far different from a mere newspaper man. Bennett was confessedly a money-maker. Raymond was, indeed, a thorough journalist, and Godkin also, one of the highest type; but Godkin was, after all, not born an American, though perhaps of more use to us on that account. Then, I confess that what draws me chiefly to Bowles is that no other journalist—and few other men of his time—has left us so complete, vivid, and passionately human a record of himself.

He was a journalist who grew as his paper grew. He had little more education than that of simple New England home life. In 1844, at eighteen

years of age, a country boy, he took hold of his father's weekly country paper, the "Springfield Republican," and before he died, he made it one of the most intelligent and valuable dailies in the United States, "the most comprehensive newspaper," declared the "Nation," at the time of his death, "we believe it is no exaggeration to say, in the country." [1] And a good authority asserted that "no American journal during the last ten or twenty years has been more diligently studied by editors." [2]

There was always, to be sure, about the paper, as about its editor, a certain spice of provincialism, or, as he would have put it, localism. But those who know the old-fashioned New England country towns will admit that their atmosphere may be far broader and less fundamentally provincial than that of larger centres. There was fifty years ago, perhaps there is to-day, some truth in this provincial editor's gibe at the metropolis of his State: "Always except Boston, of course, which has no more conception of what is going on in the world than the South Sea Islanders themselves." [3]

Bowles's whole life, outside of his family affections, was in his paper, and he saw the world and mankind through his paper's eyes. Every department was always under his immediate supervision, and he interested himself as much in the advertising and business management as in the editorials.

When he began work, modern possibilities of

news were just developing, and he seized upon them eagerly. In the early days he himself reported, with keen observation and that journalistic sense of what counts which is more than observation, and he was always on the lookout for capable reporters. "News," he said, "is the distinctive object of the 'Republican' to which all other things must bend." [4] Some thought he was not over-particular about the news he printed or the means of obtaining it. Even his ardent biographer, Merriam, admits that he sometimes appeared to cater to an unhealthy curiosity, and the ill-natured review of Merriam in the "Nation," said to be by W. P. Garrison, calls Bowles "a great gossip and by no means a safe confidant." [5] Yet he would certainly not have subscribed without reserve to the rather generous principle of Dana, "I have always felt that whatever the Divine Providence permitted to occur I was not too proud to report;" [6] just as Dana himself might have shrunk from some later developments of his own doctrine, though indeed the chief error of these is apt to consist in reporting what even the Divine Providence did not permit to occur.

But, however vast his appetite for news, Bowles would have been the first to recognize that the newspaper had another function besides mere reporting, that of commenting on news and shaping public opinion in regard to it. How important this function is can best be realized by

reflecting that it did not exist at all a hundred years ago, and that even now it hardly exists elsewhere as it does in America. Up to the year eighteen hundred the pulpit did what the newspaper now does. The minister had the leading, because he had the reading, of the community. He commented on the world's doings in the light of the moral law, and men went away and saw God's finger in everything. Just how far the daily and Sunday papers have undermined the influence of the pulpit, who shall say? They have certainly taken the place of it, with some gain in universal information, but with enormous moral loss. "This country is not priest-ridden, but press-ridden," said Longfellow shrewdly.[7] With the best will in the world, and I believe such will is seldom altogether wanting, the editor has many things to consider besides moral elevation, and even if he wishes to furnish such an article, he is not always competent to do so. When we read the words of Bowles, "The church organization seems to me a failure — at least that we have outgrown it, or are fast outgrowing it," [8] — and think, as he no doubt thought, of the newspaper as supplying the church's place, we should remember the weighty remark of Godkin in regard to the defects and dangers of journalism, "defects and dangers which nearly every one sees but editors, and which it would be well if editors saw oftener — the recklessness, haste, indifference to finish and

accuracy and abstract justice which it is apt to beget in the minds of those who pursue it, and especially of those who pursue it eagerly." [9]

No one would have recognized these defects in general more heartily than Bowles. But no one was more earnest in insisting upon the power of the press as guide and leader. A "Republican" editorial, written during the war, which we may assume to be his, proclaims, "With all its failings, with all its prostitutions, the press is the great reliance and safeguard in a time like this, and with a government like ours. And we believe it mainly appreciates its opportunities and responsibilities and is earnest to fulfill them." [10] He, at any rate, was earnest, and he did his very best to make a paper that should bring him an honest livelihood and should at the same time be a great and inspiring influence in public affairs, should consider the public good only, should be conservative with the radicals and progressive with the conservatives, should regard principles and not parties, measures and not men, and should follow truth without the slightest care for a merely formal consistency.

This is a high ideal for a newspaper or anything else in this imperfect world, and it is needless to say that the "Republican," having an editor who was thoroughly human, did not always live up to it. It is a fine thing to avoid extremes, but in doing so you are sure to become obnoxious to all extremists. Hence the "Republican," in its thirty

years' development during Bowles's life, got plenty of shrewd knocks from all parties in succession. It is a fine thing to be independent. Unfortunately complete independence is impossible. There are so many cross-twists and conflicting considerations to be taken into account, that at times independence may be taken for discretion, and W. P. Garrison could even go so far as to say of his able competitor that as a politician "he was essentially timid and time-serving." [11] Again, it is a fine thing to scorn consistency. Emerson did, and why should not Sam Bowles? "It is no trouble at all to me," he says, "that the paper contradicts itself. My business is to tell what seems to me the truth and the news to-day. . . . It's a daily journal. I am not to live to be as old as Methusaleh, and brood in silence over a thing till, just before I die, I think I have it right." [12] The excuse is fascinating certainly, but the practice is apt to have its difficulties.

These difficulties showed in nothing more than in the "Republican's" — and its editor's — delusions as to men. One hero after another — Banks, Dawes, Colfax, Greeley, not to mention others — was set up and urged upon the public, till Time stowed them all neatly away in the vast wallet that contains his tribute to oblivion. Andrew, wrote Bowles, in 1861, "is conceited, dogmatic, and lacks breadth and tact for government," Lincoln "is a 'simple Susan.'" [13] These

are things that a man — or a newspaper — would rather not have said.

II

But such criticisms do not alter the fact that during all those trying, bitter, passionate years the "Republican" stood earnestly for the best, the highest things, and was in every way and at every point alive. If it was so, it was because Samuel Bowles was as thoroughly alive as any man who ever put pen to paper to describe the doings and sufferings of this intricate world. He had his faults and weaknesses; but sloth and inertia and indifference were not among them.

All the man's life, his whole soul, are reflected in the letters contained in his biography, which are much more significant than his formal books of travel or even his editorials. It is a great pity that his correspondence has not been collected and published separately, for in my judgment no more telling, varied, human letters have been written upon this side of the Atlantic.

Dead letters do not mean dead souls. There are souls touched with the keenest intensity of living that either cannot or will not reveal themselves in correspondence with even their most intimate friends. Take as an instance the letters of Matthew Arnold. Here assuredly was a man of the widest thought and the subtlest spiritual experience. Yet he writes almost wholly of practical affairs, in a

dull conventional strain, which has no claim to attention except undeniable simplicity and sincerity. But letters alive as those of Bowles must certainly indicate a burning heart behind them. Take the *verve* of a scrap from one of the earlier: "Croak, croak, croak! Why the devil can't Berkshire do something besides? Let those who are right go to work." [14] Nor is it in any way a matter of mere slang or expletives. These fly freely when they add force or color, but there is plenty of force and color without them. There are grace and sparkle in the adjectives, there is delicate suggestion in the sweep of the phrases, there is above all that cunning, instinctive use of rhythm to charm, to spur, to stimulate, which is perhaps the most effective instrument of the great prose writer. "I should chiefly regret Aiken of this lot. I have imbibed a good deal of respect for that man. Ben Butler says he is an exaggeration of the stage Yankee; but he is fresh and hearty, and keen and human, and says civil things about me — and of course I like him." [15] When letters run on like that, through two stout volumes, we are bound to learn something about the man that writes them.

First, he was a man of the deepest, tenderest affection and devotion. He married very young a girl who was very young and their attachment through early years of struggle and later years of illness is charming to study and appreciate. They had ten children, which naturally means care,

especially for a worker of limited means and nervous temperament. The difference of sex gleams vividly in the father's casual remark as to the death of one at birth: "She [Mrs. Bowles] feels her loss terribly. Though a disappointment, it is a small matter to me, only as it affects her." [16]

Yet the most watchful care and solicitude for both mother and children are everywhere apparent, a care that was duly and lovingly returned. The husband's full appreciation of all he received shows in this passage, referring to a journey proposed for his benefit: "Of course Mrs. Bowles is always ready to say go; you know she would give up any gratification, or endure any suffering, to give me pleasure, or get me out of the way of a half-day of work. But that does n't make it always right that I should take her at her word — by no means." [17] While this constant anxiety for the welfare of the woman he adored appears characteristically and delightfully in a letter laying down a minute programme of what she should do for her health every hour in the day: the meals, the air, the exercise, the society: "Have somebody come to see you every day. Read newspapers more. Read light books more. Study things that make for fun and peace." [18] And we know, and he knew, that nobody ever obeys such injunctions. But to give them eases the tired heart of love in solitude. As for his children, his care of them was guided by this exquisite precept, which would save a

world of woe if it were written on every parent's heart: "It is not much that I do for my children, but I never want to lose sight of myself at their ages — then the little I do can be done more intelligently." [19]

Nor was his family affection all care and solicitude. As to his children, listen to this pretty rapture on one of the ten in infancy: "He is practicing on *Yes* and *Mamma;* but all his efforts at the latter melt sweetly into *Papa* — so ravishingly." [20] And the following delicate discrimination proves the thoughtful study of enduring tenderness: "We are all pretty well; Ruth is a breeze from the northwest, and Dwight from the south, all the while; Bessie is dainty and shy and quaint and strange, and Charlie is enterprising beyond his power." [21]

As for the depth of conjugal devotion, it is shown so profoundly and so searchingly all through the book, that passages are difficult to choose. I select one not addressed to Mrs. Bowles, which, underneath its general analysis of emotion, implies personal experience of the deepest and most intimate character: "You must give if you expect to receive — give happiness, friendship, love, joy, and you will find them floating back to you. Sometimes you will give more than you receive. We all do that in some of our relations, but it is as true a pleasure often to give without return as life can afford us. We must not make bargains with the heart, as we would with the butcher for

his meat. Our business is to give what we have to give — what we can get to give. The return we have nothing to do with. It will all come in due time — in this world or another." [22]

As these words indicate, Bowles's sympathy and tenderness extended far beyond the family circle. Indeed, they were as wide as the world. He has observation just as subtle and delicate on unselfishness and sacrifice as on positive affection: "We, fortunately, know our failures, and, alas, how well we know them. And yet, out of our very selfishness, out of our very neglect, God buildeth us up; so that what we do perform for kindred and friends takes on larger power and gives deeper bliss than if in a narrow way we had given more hours and thought and service to the beloved. It is a shadowy, tender line between service to ourselves and service to others." [23]

It is true that this is a newspaper man, who looked at life from the journalistic angle, which is not always strictly humanitarian. To be sure, even as an editor his keen, delightful sympathies often warm his impersonal comment, as when he writes of a deceased celebrity, "Years and invalid experience have unlocked for us some of the mysteries of his life; we know him better lately without seeing him at all." [24] But it is also said that his zeal for news sometimes led to disastrous revelations, as when he stopped prize-fighting in Springfield by printing the names of respected citizens

who had patronized it; while in other cases his methods were less justified by results.

In private life Bowles's kindness was by no means confined to theory or sentiment. There is clear record of many deeds of broad generosity and covert indication of many more. Perhaps the most touching is recorded in the last words written by him to his wife, before sailing for Europe in search of health, when money was none too abundant, and other prospects were dreary enough: "—— has just come in to say good-bye. He will write you. He accepts our offer. I am very glad of it. Now send him and —— the money regularly, and tell nobody." [25]

There are little kindnesses, little matters of thoughtfulness, which often mean more than money, and certainly endear more. In these Bowles was admirably proficient, because he had the instinct for them. And there is no occasion when such kindnesses are more needed, more appreciated, and more difficult than during travel. General Walker, an admirable judge, who was with Bowles for some months in England, testifies to his exceptional qualities in this direction. He was always thoughtful of others, enjoyed every minute of their pleasures, and was much more anxious to discover what his young companions wished to see than to see anything himself.

In short, he was an eminently social being. This is evident from the first page of his biography

to the last. It is true that he had his times of reserve and repression, times when he did not seem to welcome even friends. Such times must come to every man who lives a busy, eager, crowded inner life. "Why," he said to one of his acquaintances, "why don't people clap me on the shoulder, with a 'How are you, old fellow,' as they do you?" "Because," was the answer, "you go along with a look that says, 'Keep away from me — d——n you!'" [16] But the very pathos of the query shows a longing for human contact and fellowship and intimacy, and this pathetic longing is especially apparent in Bowles's exclamations of solitude and loneliness when he is traveling and among strangers. Busy as his thoughts were, they did not give him sufficient companionship. If he had a delightful experience, he wanted a friend to share it. If he had a bitter experience, he wanted a friend to take away the sting.

This intense human interest undoubtedly served him well in the business of his life. Nobody profits more by human contact than the journalist. To Bowles the wide world was, in a sense, fodder for his paper. He talked with men of all types and occupations, gathered ideas from the professor and the mechanic, from the farmer and the lawyer, from the fine lady and the ditch-digger in the streets. He carried to perfection the delicate art of listening and knew how to make his own speech serve to elicit the speech and the inmost thought of others.

At the same time, in doing this he was no hypocrite, did not seek men's company with any cold design of betraying their confidence, did not scoff at or deride them. If he mingled freely and widely with his fellows, it was first of all because he loved to do it, loved the touch of the human hand and the sound of the human voice. It was this spontaneous and constant humanity which made his presence so widely sought in all societies. Senator Dawes wrote, after Bowles's death: "I never knew a man who knew him who would n't rather have him at his table than any other man in the world." [27]

Even in illness and decay, when most of us prefer to brood alone over disappointment and failure, this same charming social instinct found utterance in one of those delightful passages which are in themselves complete lyric poems: "I was sure you would have a pleasant summer with the Haskells. They are dreadful good fellows, both of them. But I could n't have kept up with your gait. I am the chap for 'the bank where the wild thyme grows,' with one other fellow, male or female, lying in the sunshine, picking flowers to pieces, and discoursing on the frivolity of things we cannot do." [28]

The distinction, or indistinction, of sex in this passage is characteristic; for among Bowles's multitude of friends there were many women. His relations with them seem to have been wholly

intellectual and I see no reason to suppose that Mrs. Bowles had ever any cause for jealousy. But his quick, light, active spirit naturally responded to a woman's gayety and sensitiveness, and he sought them, wanted them, missed them. At Baden-Baden he complains that "there are no women to chaff with, and to rub your mind out of its morbidity." [29] None of his letters are more varied, more charming, more full of fresh and vivid interest than those he writes to Miss Whitney. At one moment he laughs with her over some trifle, some new fashion or folly, at the next he is discussing the future of democracy or the welfare of his soul.

It appears that with women he was always perfectly easy and natural, did not stand in awe of them or regard them as in any way different. Says one lady of his visits, "He used to come in for a few moments, on his way back and forth between his home and his office, and would perhaps sit with both legs hanging over the arm of a chair, his hat low down over his eyes, and talk *sarse*, as he called it." [30] Also, he did not abstain from that affectionate criticism which one sex always feels privileged to bestow upon the other. "Women are fascinating creatures; yet it is treading upon eggs all the time to deal with them." [31] And again, in his extraordinarily careless, vivid fashion: "Traveling with women sops up one's time awfully." [32]

But we have the testimony of the most intelligent men and women both that this ease and occasional apparent flippancy did not spring from indifference or contempt. "I hardly ever saw any one give just the sort of recognition to a woman that he did," says one male friend; "treating her as an intellectual equal, yet with a kind of chivalrous deference, suggested rather than expressed." [83] And a woman has rarely paid finer tribute to a man than that of Miss Brackett: "Of all the men I have ever known, he was the only one who never made a woman feel as if he were condescending in thought or word when he talked to her." [84]

III

I have not meant to emphasize Bowles's social qualities at the expense of his intellectual, for it is the latter that make him most interesting now and that account for most of his achievement, though here also the social did its part. He was not a profound or elaborate thinker on abstract questions, did not pretend to be. In all matters of practical morals and the conduct of life he had very energetic and decided opinions and proclaimed them in his letters and in his paper, perhaps not always logically or consistently, but always with a manifest intention of promoting the good in the world. He liked to preach and believed that he did it better than a good many parsons, in which he was certainly right. "Nor do I see any

other line of influence or noble effort in this world except in behalf of ideals." [86] What could be more touching or more significant of a life passed with high aims than his last words to Dawes: "Drop on your knees, Dawes, and thank God that you have done a little good in the world, and ask his forgiveness that you have done no more." [86]

Also, as time served, he liked to wrestle with great spiritual problems. "Without philosophy," he wrote, "there is vastly little of life but a passion and a struggle." [87] The long letter written to Miss Whitney in January, 1862, is an intensely curious analysis of religious and speculative theories, the earnest effort of a mind not schooled by abstract thought to disentangle the complex web of human longing and passion and despair. Of almost equal interest is the letter to Mrs. Bowles expressing a humble desire to conform to her religious observances, even when he could not himself wholly enter into them.

Yet the attitude generally is one of groping, not a sad or morbid groping, but a willingness to leave to God the things that are God's, while working day and night at the task which God has set us to be done in this world. The whole nature of the man leaps out in one of those splendid phrases that he had the secret of coining [italics mine]: "It is comforting to *people with free and vagrant heads* to feel that there is even a Christianity back of and with-

out Christ, and to which he seems rather interpreter and disciple than founder." [38]

A "free and vagrant head"! That is what gives Bowles much of his charm, and he himself prized that freedom far above what any conventional education could have given him. For he had no academic discipline, and very little of school; got what learning he possessed from the touch of human heads and hearts and the careful contemplation of his own. "His lack of early training was never compensated by self-culture or wise reflection," [39] says W. P. Garrison, scornfully. This is far too severe. At the same time, it is curious to consider that a man who was all his life a guide to the public through written words should have been so little conversant with the written words of others. Bowles's reading was mainly newspapers, and newspapers, though good seasoning, are not very substantial diet for the intellect.

Bowles himself was keenly aware of his deficiencies. Indeed, as regards style and literary qualities, he was far too humble. "The book made itself," he says of one of his volumes of travel; "it is a newspaper book; I am a newspaper writer, and not a book writer; and I don't aspire to be other than I am." [40] Again: "I was afraid you would think it [an editorial] a little overwrought, and not low-toned enough for the subject. That is where I err always in my work; it

gives it something of its power and charm with the mass of readers; it loses for it something of the impression on the select and superior few." [41] And as he criticized his own writing, so he often lamented his lack of leisurely reading, of wide contact with the best thought and experience of humanity. When he traveled in Europe, art meant little to him, historical association meant little to him. He sighs for time and strength to think, to adjust himself to the larger current of the world, to get out of the mad, exhausting whirl of news, mere news, which makes the passing passions of the hour seem out of all proportion to the permanent interests of life. Yet even in these longings, books, the distillation of human activity, do not take first place. "I would roam about the world, studying books some, nature a good deal, and people and institutions more." [42]

For the man was above all a worker and liver. It was just the "free and vagrant head" that made his life so joyously abundant and his paper so forcible. His intelligence may not have been profound, but it was splendid in its vigor, its energy, its variety, its speed. How direct and frank it was, profiting by its very self-training to brush away old convention and the dry bones of formal futility! Has he to congratulate a friend on a congressional victory? [43] "It is not statesmanship, and you know it. But it is all of statesmanship, I frankly admit, that the present Con-

gress is up to." Do fools torment him with old saws about dead reputations? "I hate the '*Nil de mortuis*,' etc. What do men die for, except that posterity may impartially judge, and get the full benefit of their example?" [44]

So in his business. He wanted no shirkers, no drivelers, no fuss, no make-believe. He exacted work, faithful, earnest, driving work. He was in a sense a severe taskmaster, having sharp reproof at his command, when necessary, not in stormy verbosity, but in just the word or two that find a joint and put a barb in it. He insisted upon exactness, nicety, finish, and set a high standard of mechanical production in days when there were fewer facilities than at present.

But he knew how to make work easy, so far as it ever can be. His office was systematized. Each man had his task, was taught how and when to do it and by whom it was to be supervised and criticized when done. And if the chief could reprove, he could also encourage. Sharp words were lightened by a touch of the quick, sympathetic humor that was natural to him. Words of praise were rare, but they meant something when they came, and power of achievement in any special line was quickly discerned and energetically supported.

Moreover, work was urged on by the most powerful stimulus of all, example. This was no man to set wheels a-going and then watch them whirl at his leisure. From his journeyman days

to the last minute when work was possible, and longer, he labored with all that was in him. "What with forty-two hours' continuous work Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday, without sleep, and getting over it, I had not time to write to you," is one of his casual, significant comments.[45] Work was his life, writes one who knew him intimately. We have seen the depth of his domestic affection. Yet in a sense it would be just to say that for thirty years the "Springfield Republican" was wife and child and food and sleep to him. It certainly robbed him of any complete enjoyment of all these things, though it also made his enjoyment of them keener. Even his recreation had usually storm and fury in it. He liked a horse, but he cared nothing for looks or pedigree. What he wanted was speed. An acquaintance, who had studied this phase, said of him, "He was fonder of reckless driving than any man I ever knew." [46] Then, though rarely, he would relax and drop into absolute quiescence. As he lay one afternoon on the piazza, with the apple-blossoms blowing over him, he murmured, "This, I guess, is as near heaven as we shall ever get in this life." [47]

For, as you see, he was a mere bundle of nerves, the quintessence of our sun-and-wind-driven New England temperament, whose life is work, whose death is work, whose heaven is work, whatsoever other heaven we may dream of. You may read it written on his spare, energetic figure, on his sensi-

tive, strained, wistful forehead, above all, in his intense and eager eyes. It was the quick, responsive nerves that enabled him to do the work he did, that gave him passionate joys and passionate sorrows. Even when the nerves are disordered and tormenting, he recognizes their value with wonderfully subtle analysis. "There is a certain illumination with the disorder that is enchanting at times." [48] He is determined that they shall be his servants, not his masters. Now he lays whip and spur to them, forces them to do and overdo, till a set task is accomplished. Again he restrains them, lives by rule and system, makes schedules of food, schedules of hours. These exuberant sensibilities are splendid things, so you control them. "Sympathies and passions are greater elements of power than he [a friend] admits. All they want is to have judgment equal to and directing them. No matter how powerful, how acute they are — the more so the better. But sympathies and passions that run away with us are oftener a curse than a blessing." [49] He thinks he has controlled them, declares he has. "You must remember I have necessarily schooled myself to coolness and philosophy, and to the look ahead. Otherwise my life would have killed me years ago." [50]

But such control, especially when carried beyond the normal, is a wearing, exhausting process and is sure in the end to bring a penalty. Bowles, with his "look ahead," knew this perfectly well

and faced it always. When a friend warned him of what was inevitably coming, he answered with these striking words: "I know it just as well as you do. When my friends point out that I am working toward a breakdown, they seem to think that is to influence my action. Not at all! I have got the lines drawn, the current flowing, and by throwing my weight here now, I can count for something. If I make a long break or parenthesis, to get strong, I shall lose my chance. No man is living a life that is worth living, unless he is willing to die for somebody or something, — at least to die a little." [51]

Admirable words, and perhaps wise, though not for all, nor at all times. Dying a little is not always conveniently managed at discretion, nor even dying a great deal. And Bowles's disregard and positive abuse of his nerves not only killed him at fifty-two, but caused him and all who loved him infinite distress and misery before that time. He perfectly understood the cause of his troubles: "My will has carried me for years beyond my mental and physical power; that has been the offending rock." [52] Again: "Nobody knows how I have abused my brain but myself, and I therefore ought to be the most patient with its maladies." [53]

But to know the cause and to find the cure are far, far different. Therefore, from a very early stage, his life was made up alternately of extrava-

gant effort at home to do more than he or any one man could do, and then of forced change and travel to procure that renovation which could only come, or could at any rate come far better, from within, by the acquired habit of repose.

Repose, peace, and the tranquil sleep that should go with them — these were the remedies, the blessings that Bowles sought far and wide, up and down, for thirty years. He told Mr. Howells in Venice that he was sleeping only one hour out of the twenty-four. Sometimes he slept more than that, but he never slept enough. Modern medical methods might have helped him a little. The advice he had was well meant, but now sounds strange. "Kill a horse, and it will do you good." [54] He might have killed a dozen horses, but black care would none the less have buzzed and snarled about his ears.

Peace! Peace! Not Clarendon's Falkland could more longingly *ingeminate* the word. Perhaps Bowles knew so little about it that he overestimated its blessings. "I never saw in his face," said a friend, "the expression of repose — the look was always of fire or tire"; [55] but even Clarendon wrote few things more striking than this paragraph on peace in heaven, though the quality is not Clarendon's. "I wonder if we shall have such weather in heaven! whether or no we go — whether or no such weather. But if the world lives much longer it will have abolished all these

notions of its youth. The Unitarians came, and abolished hell; Parker came, Higginson stays, to abolish Christ; the next conceited set of upstarts, inventing a new elixir of life, out of gin and juniper berries, will probably supersede heaven, or bring it down to earth. But that is what the rest of us dream of doing — but it can't be done so long as nerves thrill and stomachs labor. No elixir of love, or gin, can make heaven, with neuralgia playing on the fiddles of the orchestra, and dyspepsia groaning through the grim trombone. Give it up. I think I will stick to the original heaven as a thing more sure." [56]

Nerves so thoroughly and constantly jangled could not fail to produce some unfortunate results in practical life. However perfect the control, there was irritability that would break forth at times. Bowles often refers to being thoroughly cross and out of sorts, sometimes in a mood of discouragement, sometimes with his whimsical grace and fancy. Others refer to it also. In his home, with those he cherished, breaks of temper seem to have been rare; but in his office, though he was much admired and much beloved, he was regarded with a good deal of awe also.

And the jangled nerves brought hours of depression and temporary hopelessness. He sometimes refers to these, expressing them with his really wonderful gift of telling phraseology: "I did not mount my great heights of abandon; perhaps it

is better described in your own sad words as a '*wise despair.*'" [57] Take, again, this passage of extraordinary self-analysis, written to Mrs. Bowles, and doubly striking from a man so schooled by persistent discipline to courage and hope: "Mary, don't let my fretful, downcast moods annoy you. They are unworthy of me, and I ought to rise above them, and control them. But sometimes they master and overpower me. I want to give it all up sometimes. Nobody can understand the spell that is upon me. It cannot be described — it does n't seem as if anybody else can ever feel it. Consider me if you can as a little child, sick and peevish, wanting love and indulgence and petting and rest and peace. There, this ought not to have been written. But it can't be unwritten, and it is too late to write anything else. It is morbid; but there's truth, sometimes the clearest, in our morbid reflections. Health is too often independence, selfish philosophy, and indifference." [58]

Also, worn nerves bring not only general depression and discouragement, but a bitter sense of tasks unaccomplished and vast hopes unrealized. This impression of failure or of uncompleted effort was most keenly felt by Bowles. He was a man with more than the common human passion for success. He could not bear to have other men defeat him. He could not bear to have chance or cross accident defeat him. To have his own nerves defeat him was humiliation hardly to be described.

He loved power, he loved domination, he loved mastery.

No one appreciated more broadly than he the immense power that is given to the modern newspaper, and it was for this reason, more than for any other, that he loved newspaper work. In his own office he was absolute master, not a tyrant certainly, but in a quiet, determined, final fashion the one sole authority on little and great affairs.

In this love of power lay unquestionably Bowles's weakness. The most marked failure of his life was his attempt to transfer his activity from the "Republican" to the "Boston Traveller," in 1857. Various explanations were sought for this. Various elements no doubt entered into it. But a considerable element was the man's own autocratic and imperious disposition. W. P. Garrison's theory, that he undertook the task "with a bumptiousness that at once made him the laughing-stock of his esteemed contemporaries," [59] is much too harsh, but it suggests substantial truth, nevertheless.

So, in the conduct of his own paper, he was too inclined to assert his personal views and feelings, for the pure pleasure of it. Independence in politics and religion is a difficult and dangerous path to follow, and an editor in absolute control is apt to mistake whim for pure reason and the rejection of others' judgment for the assertion of his own. If I quote Garrison's "Nation" review yet again, it is because there is a certain malicious pleasure in

watching the editors of these two great journals, whose work was in some ways similar, criticize each other as they criticized all the rest of the world. Garrison, then, says "the sort of independence which Mr. Bowles gradually achieved consisted in making a fetich of his journal"; [60] and he again characterizes Bowles's effort as "the evasion of personal responsibility under the guise of a highly virtuous independence." [61] When the critic of the "Nation" penned this and the other amenities I have before cited, he had just had before his eyes the following from one of Bowles's letters: "The 'Nation' has become a permanent and proud addition to American journalism. Often conceited and priggish; coldly critical to a degree sometimes amusing, and often provoking; and singularly lacking, not only in a generous enthusiasm of its own, but in any sympathy with that great American quality, by which alone we as a people are led on to our efforts and our triumphs in the whole arena of progress; the paper yet shows such vigor and integrity of thought, such moral independence of party, such elevation of tone, and such wide culture, as to demand our great respect and secure our hearty praise." [62]

But if Bowles's criticism had some justice in it, so also had Garrison's. Bowles's own biographer admits that he was too ready to sacrifice friendship to what he considered duty, and that he freely found fault in his paper with those whom he loved

and by whom he wished to be loved in private life. And have we not Bowles's own personal testimony on the subject, none the less forcible for being half jocose? "I mean to be as loyal as possible, and that is n't very loyal; for you know I do love to find fault and grumble, and thank God I can afford to." [63] But who of us can really afford to grumble and find fault?

Yet what finer witness can there be to character than the great love that surrounded this man, in spite of his fault-finding? Those whom he attacked publicly resented it for a while, but once they met him they forgot it. He had the art of making men forget everything except his charm. All his life he fought Ben Butler. Yet, whenever they met, they swapped jokes and stories. When Bowles was on his deathbed, he received from Butler a letter of sympathy and good wishes, and almost his last words were, "Write to thank General Butler, and say that while Mr. Bowles has always differed from him in politics, he has never failed to recognize his high qualities, and to appreciate his many personal attractions." [64] Senator Dawes suffered repeatedly from the strictures of the "Republican"; yet he declared that he loved its editor more than any one outside of his own family.[65] A member of the editorial staff, who had been a witness of many sharp rebuffs, confesses, "I almost worshiped him. There was more religion in my feeling toward him than in almost anything else in me." [66] But most

touching of all is the exclamation commonly heard among his humble neighbors in the city of Springfield, "I am so sorry Sam Bowles is going to die." [67]

He was a striking and most sympathetic type of journalist, and the journalist is interesting because he came into the world only a hundred years ago and seems likely to play an increasingly great part in it. Certainly no one who has followed our own Civil War in the newspapers can fail to feel the singular and important position they then occupied. If the war itself is to be regarded as a great tragic drama, the newspapers almost precisely perform the function of the Greek tragic chorus. They comment abstractly, yet with trembling eagerness, upon the conduct and motives of the actors, they intervene often indiscreetly and with doubly tragic consequence, they prophesy with pathetic or ludicrous incapacity of vision, above all they reflect, from moment to moment, like a sensitized surface, the long, unwieldy, enormous ebb and flow of events and passions and desires of which no man can really divine the end.

THE END

NOTES

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NOTES

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5. Alexander K. McClure, *Recollections of Half a Century*, p. 316.
6. *O. S.*, p. 57.
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63. *O. S.*, p. 196.
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65. *O. S.*, p. 18.
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